AMAZING HEROES

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PREVIEW

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THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN HAVING AN ITCH YOU CAN'T SCRATCH . . .

Pollution, famine, terrorism, disinformation, racism, corruption, censorship—as we careen into the 1990s, it often seems as if the world is spinning out of control.

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***itchy PLANET* #1**: special nuclear issue, with work by Larry (*Cartoon History of the Universe*) Gonick, Jerry Gold, Neil Postman, Norman Dog, Michael Dougan, and Leonard Rifas. Plus a survey of AIDS comics.

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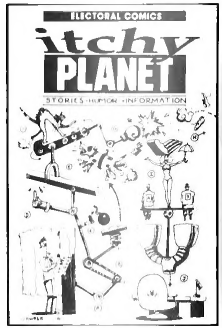
***itchy PLANET* #2**: "Comics Warp Our Vision" issue. Censorship, corporate piggishness, racism, sexism, and addiction: Joyce Farmer, Mary Fleener, Steve Lafler, Dennis Worden, Mark Campos, Nick Thorkelson dissect your favorite medium.



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EDITORIAL

When did humor become a dirty word in comic books?

I don't know, but right now it seems to rank right up there with "Jim Shooter," "Flexographic Press," and "work-for-hire" in the naughty-words lexicon of the comics community.

Take the *Batman* movie, for instance. The rumors that whiz-kid director Tim Burton and hot-star Michael Keaton might not be treating Bob Kane's literary creation as a combination of Hamlet and Captain Ahab have caused a ruckus among comics fans and pros next to which the *The Last Temptation of Christ* flap pales into insignificance.

Now, maybe I'm missing something here, but last time I looked, *Batman* was a story about a guy who dresses up in a bat costume and terrorizes criminals—and then fights another guy who's white, green, and red, and laughs maniacally while pulling crazy jokes on his victims. My sense of humor may not coincide with that of many people (I'm vastly amused by George Romero zombie movies, Johnny Rotten, and Marti's *The Cabbie*), but I don't believe I'm alone in thinking this is funny stuff. At least, I don't think it's entirely serious. And I certainly don't see how it could be made into (a) a drama, (b) a subtle psychological exploration, or *pace* Frank Miller, (c) a socially relevant examination of vigilanteism. It strikes me, on the other hand, as something you could make a real fun movie out of.

Remember *Superman—The Movie*? The first one, the one we all went crazy for ten years ago? Okay, now, think back: which parts were the draggy ones, the parts you fast-forward past on the VCR? The lugubrious Krypton sequence, all the great-fields-of-wheat shots around Smallville, Clark trundling solemnly through the Arctic, right? Okay, now, which were the fun parts? The *Front Page*-type *Daily Planet* banter, all the scenes involving Gene Hackman's broadly played Lex Luthor. . .etc.

Does this begin to suggest anything?

The fundamental problem moviemakers face is that a guy in a skin-tight costume is almost certainly going to look stupid. You can get away with something like Batman in the comics because it's a different medium and different rules apply: working with these abstract lines on paper, it's easier to fake out the reader's eye, to create a working environment for something as goofy as a super-hero. (Remember, comics can also make talking ducks and shambling muck-monsters seem plausible.) In films, it becomes very hard to pull off at all, and practically impossible to pull off "seriously."

One of the few movies this could possibly work for is the *Watchmen* project: as written by Alan Moore and drawn by Dave Gibbons, the heroes are *supposed* to look dorky. (Using the stolid Gibbons, a scrupulous craftsman whose work lacks any real fire or energy, is a case of brilliant casting here.) If you want an idea of how a "realistically" done Batman would come off on the silver screen, take another look at any of those panels with Nite Owl standing around in costume, looking forlorn and dopey.

Given the track records of Tim Burton and Michael Keaton (and, for that matter, Jack Nicholson), there is every evidence that they, and screenwriter Sam Hamm, are going to tackle the problem squarely: rather than subscribing to the idiotic fanboy notion that the Batman concept is a valid dramatic idea that can be treated as a "serious" movie, they are going to address the flamboyant pulp aspects of the material, turn it slightly sideways, and pump it up to two or three times normal pressure.

Which means, directly, or indirectly, humor. And, in a certain sense, comedy.

Since *Beetlejuice* is the previous movie by Burton and Keaton, and since it is also in the fantasy genre, maybe we should spend a little time thinking about how this reflects on the upcoming *Batman*.

The only thing badly wrong with *Beetlejuice* is the story, whose logic is ramshackle at best, and whose pace is subject to fits and spurts. But amidst all the pinwheels and firecrackers, Burton handles the emotional and dramatic lines of the movie deftly and sensitively, imparting genuine poignance to the protagonists' predicament, and treating Winona Ryder's grim, neurotic teeny-bopper with a combination of sympathy and humor. But when he wants to, he can lay on the pyrotechnics and jolt the viewer with both humor and horror.

The more I think about it, in fact, the better I think Burton is suited for this particular job.

Another thought: in these days of integrity-of-the-creator speechifying and back-to-the-basics tub-thumping, we might want to ask the actual *creator* of Batman—and to hell with all this "*the* Batman" bullshit, once and for all!—what he thinks.

Well, as it turns out, Bob Kane loves the idea of the movie, loves the casting, and thinks it'll be great all around. (In fact, I'm told his first casting choice for Batman was Dan Aykroyd.) This is probably because Kane is an adult who realizes that Batman may be a transcendent fictional creation but not a "serious" one. . . and that it is also a concept open to a wide variety of interpretations, all of which fail or succeed by their own vitality and integrity. And vitality and integrity is something that Burton, Keaton, and Nicholson have in spades.

One more thing: Several people have complained that Michael Keaton doesn't have a chin. Big deal. Neither do bats.

I know. That's a pretty dumb rebuttal. But after reading, in *CBG*, the letter from the guy who said Michael Keaton couldn't play Batman because Batman's hair is black and straight while Keaton's is brown and curly, I think this discussion has passed out of the realm of serious discourse.

Finally, some fans (and even some pros, who should know better) seem to think that if Batman is made into a "good, serious" movie people will respect comic books more, while a "humorous" one will confirm their suspicions that comics are juvenile fantasies. Wrong. Comics will be treated as valid, intelligent literature after they have built up enough published examples of valid, intelligent literature to justify that. To think that a Batman movie—*any* Batman movie—is going to accelerate that process is the kind of wishful thinking that has given us 50 years of costumed claptrap and will likely give us 50 more.

So let's give Burton a chance, huh?

—*KIM THOMPSON*

NEXT ISSUE: We take a good, close look at NOW Comics past, present, and future; Ken Steacy has provided a lovely airbrush cover, so we interviewed him for good measure. Also, Harlan Ellison in the comics, Dwight R. Decker reveals that the group most anxious to destroy comics is in fact the Communists, Heidi MacDonald's small-press column, and no—we promise, no—irritating editorials by Kim Thompson. Reserve your copy now!

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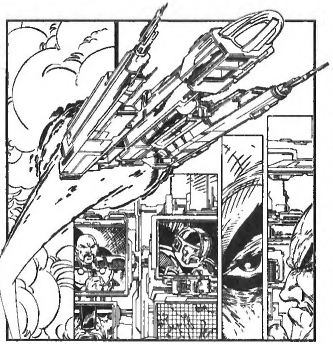

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PERSPECTIVE

Of Kids and Comics III

by Gary D. Robinson

Over Long John Silver's hot, greasy, delicious fish, I asked my family, "So what shall we do to celebrate Superman's birthday?" My wife, a dedicated school librarian, must have known I was going to ask something like that for she was quick to reply, "Could you do something at school about Superman that we could tie into Right To Read week?" I frowned. Whenever I want to talk fun, this lady wants to talk work.

Nevertheless, I was intrigued enough to pursue her idea. So about four weeks later, I stood in the elementary school cafeteria while a stream of first graders (to be followed by second through sixth graders) flowed in to the tune of John Williams' *Superman* theme. I showed these wonderful kids (who, most of the time, were so quiet you could hear a piano drop) pictures and comics. I talked to them about reading, imagination, and creativity. By the time I was done, they were willing to believe this overweight champion of the receding hairline *was* Superman as I whipped off my lenseless frames and dashed out the cafeteria door. (My wife had rushed in with the dreadful news that Lex Luthor had threatened East Canton Primary with an atomic bomb—okay, a very *small* atomic bomb).

This was a very enlightening experience, as most experiences with children are. It taught me a lot about how the youngsters of the '80s look at this super child of the '30s. Would you like to know how they see the Man of Steel?

Well, they see him with wonder, of course. They see him ready to believe in him. (How refreshing in a cynical fanboy world!) But, sadly, these kids of the almost-'90s also see Superman . . .on TV. I didn't ask how many kids actually read Superman or any other comics. I didn't have to. Their questions and comments indicated some familiarity with the animated cartoons and the films but little contact with the comics. This does not bode well for either comics or reading in general.

Two decades ago, it seemed that every kid I knew read comics. I commonly saw a *Batman* or *Turok* jerked off some unsuspecting student's desk and presented as an example of what *not* to bring to class. As recently as 20 years ago, teachers and parents feared the four-color page—an easy, gaudy rival to proper literary pursuits. That was then, this is now. I don't have statistics, but I think we can be fairly sure that the average American child today spends much more time watching video cassettes than he does reading anything, including comics. In the wake of the revolution, adults themselves have turned 180 degrees, now actually encouraging children to read comics and engage their minds with something—anything—in print.

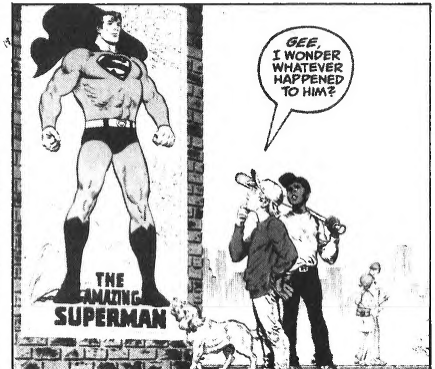
Pathetically a society struggles to cope with its ever-growing illiteracy. In a stroke of irony the great Mort Weisinger himself would have envied, television, the very whore that enticed the reader away from his pages, now encourages him to "read more about it."

This is sad, but even sadder in my view is the ever-growing gap between children and comic books. The latter was the wellspring from which the child's great hero sprang, the source the child himself first tasted and found good. Yet farther and farther away he drifts from the form. Blame VCRs or inaccessible "sophisticated" writing aimed at the more "mature" reader; blame price-hikes or the sheer length of the years, the tragic fact remains: the child market for comics is dying. When kids today ask you who the first Superman was, you know they're not asking for literary antecedents like Doc Savage or Popeye the Sailor. They're asking a question in filmography. And so you wonder whether the market can long survive.

It is sad to consider that the very ones who endowed the Man of Steel with such vitality may be the ones to pronounce him dead. It is especially sad to consider during Right To Read week.

But still I hope. I hope that DC will consider a line of Superman comics aimed at grade school children. I hope that those companies which do produce kids' comics will lower their prices so that parents put off by the sight of a dollar book will not deprive their children unnecessarily. And I hope that, after I finish typing this, I'll pull out some book—maybe *The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe*, maybe *Heidi*, or maybe *The Adventures of Superman*—put a kid in my lap and exercise that precious right to read. ●

Is the Man of Steel losing touch with kids?



NEWSLINE

PIRANHA PRESS SIGNS FOUR—MAKES JUMP TO "REAL" PUBLISHING

PIRANHA PRESS has finally thrown its hat into the ring of actual publishing with the signing of contracts for four new projects: ***ETC***, ***Beautiful Stories For Ugly Children***, ***The Score***, and ***The Sinners***.

PIRANHA editor MARK NEVELOW thanked and praised the patience, dedication, and commitment of DC COMICS' management for the help in getting started, stating, "This has been a difficult project to get off the ground, and it would have been impossible without the support, encouragement, and enthusiasm of DC. I'd especially like to thank JENETTE KAHN, DICK GIORDANO, and PAUL LEVITZ for their consistently creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems."

PIRANHA PRESS will operate with a policy of creative licensing from creators instead of one of work-made-for-hire, as many other comic publishers use. NEVELOW explained that, "Creators will own the copyright in all of the work they produce for PIRANHA PRESS. The PIRANHA PRESS contract, which also includes an unprecedented level of creative control, and reversion provisions modeled after traditional book publishing deals, has really done the job for us. It's been a key element in taking PIRANHA PRESS from an idea to reality."

The first project, *ETC*, is a five issue limited series with 56 pages per issue. It explores our culture's obsession with the media by examining a near-future even more media-crazed than our own, where the line between fantasy and reality has become hopelessly blurred. The writing & lay out on *ETC* are by TIM CONRAD, and illustration & design are by MICHAEL DAVIS.

The old beggar art was fully-painted by Alec Stevens for Piranha Press's *Sinners*.

Michael Davis's rough sketch for *ETC*.

Next up, ***Beautiful Stories For Ugly Children*** is a 32 page monthly black-and-white anthology book presenting the work of writer DAVE LOUPARE and illustrator DAN SWEETMAN. Details on the material is sketchy, but the creative team has likened the book to "a paper cut on the eyeball," "citrus fruit with milk," "a contaminated wishing well," and "skin caught in a zipper"—so many of life's simple pleasures. Each issue will feature a single, self-contained short story.

The Score is a four-issue limited series about a grim anti-hero in a taut, psychologically based thriller with political overtones about the haves and have-nots in the modern Hollywood culture. It's written by GERARD (***The Trouble With Girls***) JONES and illustrated by MARK BADGER.

And finally, ***Sinners*** is a 48-page graphic album about an old beggar and his melancholy recantation of a tragic, misspent youth. The book is written and painted by ALEC STEVENS, whose self-aware text and haunting watercolors combine for a mature look at the sins of youth and the redemption of adulthood. ALEC himself added that "I would have liked to include a soundtrack for this book, but I don't think Stravinsky can be persuaded to do any more work."

NEVELOW would also like to remind PIRANHA enthusiasts that, "These are just the first four (books) to come under contract. I have eight more projects in the wings that should be under contract shortly, and another half-dozen not quite that far along. This much quality work will allow us to have a standout lineup to follow our launch, which should be Spring of 1989." ●

CALIBER PRESS OPENS FIRE: *DEADWORLD, THE REALM, POCKET CLASSICS*

Deadworld and ***The Realm***, two titles formerly published by the now defunct ARROW COMICS, will soon be published by CALIBER PRESS. CALIBER will publish the titles in the same format as the ARROW issues, without a break in the numbering of the series. CALIBER's ***Deadworld*** will begin with number **10**. ***The Realm*** will begin with issue **#16**. Publisher GARY REED explained, "We will not start off with new #1's. . . Basically, there really isn't a need for that. Re-numbering should occur when there is a major change in direction, not just because it changes publishers."

Moontrap, the science fiction horror movie distributed by SHAPIRO-GLICKENHOUSE CORP., will soon be adapted to comic format by CALIBER PRESS. The ***Moontrap Special*** will be written by screenwriter TEX RAGSDALE, pencilled by GARY KWAPISZ, and inked by B.K. TAYLOR and DIRK JOHNSTON. The comic format will be standard comic book dimensions with at least 24 pages of story, illustrated in black-and-white. About the lack of color, publisher GARY REED remarked, "The black and white art will instantly establish the moodiness and technical features of the movie. . .too often, color tends to mute everything and the sharp delineation of the art can be lost." The book also includes production sketches, photos, and stills from the film, and an interview with star WALTER KOENIG. The package retails for $2.50 in mid-January.

Gustovich and Polard's *Cobalt Blue*.

Under an agreement with ACADEMIC INDUSTRIES, CALIBER PRESS will also be soliciting for the ***Illustrated Pocket Classic*** book series. Previously, the ***Pocket Classics*** were available only by mail, and were advertised as sets in most of the major television markets. CALIBER will now be offering stores the opportunity to purchase them individually to allow store owners to accomondate regional demands or other media tie-ins, such as the ***War of the Worlds*** television series for this fall. Each of the 60 ***Pocket*** titles is 64 pages illustrated in black and white. Retail price is $1.95 each. The ***Pocket Classics*** shipping in November are:

- ***Frankenstein***
- ***War of the Worlds***
- ***Hound of the Baskervilles***
- ***Best of Poe***
- ***A Christmas Carol***
- ***Dracula***

In December:

- ***Around the World in 80 Days***
- ***Heidi***
- ***Oliver Twist***
- ***Swiss Family Robinson***
- ***Invisible Man***
- ***Black Beauty***

In January:

- ***Time Machine***
- ***Mysterious Island***
- ***20,000 Leagues Under the Sea***
- ***Journey to the Center of the Earth***
- ***Food of the Gods***
- ***Robinson Crusoe***

CALIBER has named its anthology title ***High Caliber***, and the first 48-page issue is scheduled to ship in January for $1.95. The story line-up includes "The Crow," a preview of the soon-to-be regular CALIBER series by JAMES O'BARR; "Thrill-Kill," by MARK WINFREY; "War of the Imagination," a one-shot by KEVIN LEEN; a **Tim Vigil** story; "True Love," an anthology within the anthology written by KYLE GARRET and illustrated by BILL CUTHBERT; and "Wish," by KYLE GARRET and DIRK JOHNSTON. Future issues will feature up-and-coming talent as well as work by established comic professionals.

MIKE (***Justice Machine***) GUSTOVICH has teamed up with KEITH POLLARD to produce the ***Cobalt Blue Special*** for release in January or February of 1989. This is CALIBER's first color comic book, and it may be made into either a mini or regular series—depending on sales and GUSTOVICH's schedule for next year. ●

Covers from the Caliber's illustrated *Pocket Classics*.

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Page 9 © 1988 Eclipse.

Rick Bryant To Ink New *Total Eclipse*

Eclipse Super-Series Adds To Art Team

Inker Rick Bryant will join writer Marv Wolfman, penciller Bo Hampton, painter Sam Parsons, and letterer Bill Pearson with *Total Eclipse #3*, editor Fred Burke has announced. "Rick is doing a bang-up job," says Burke. "I really couldn't be happier."

Hampton is also enthused. "Rick and I have worked together on other projects—notably *Moon Knight #36*," says Hampton. "He did a real good job for me on that, and I've always liked his style very much.

"Both Will [Blyberg, first *Total Eclipse* inker] and Rick have certain strengths, but Rick's work is a little closer to me in terms of my influences," Hampton says. "Rick seems to be influenced by Al Williamson, who is also a big influence on me.

"I'm happiest with the work I'm doing on *Total Eclipse* right now," notes Hampton. "Starting with *Total Eclipse #3*, it's the best on the series to date, and the art gets better as the story goes along. Things really started rolling in the plot with issue #3—and the visuals reflect that quickening of the pace."

Total Eclipse #2, now on sale, was delayed when Federal Express lost seventeen pages of Hampton's pencils. "The story is called 'Nightmares,' and that's wonderfully apt," laughs Burke.

Zzed TM Eclipse. Art © 1988 Hampton/Bryant

Total Eclipse #3, with appearances by the Masked Man, the California Girls, Ms. Tree, Radio Boy, and the world of Scout, brings to a climax the initial tale of the immortal Zand. "This is the issue in which Zand's plans must be stopped—or the universe will end," says Burke. "It will take the ultimate sacrifice from one of our heroes to save the day." Also introduced in the issue are Beanish, Destroyer Duck, Hirota, Iron Ace, the Black Terror, Mr. Monster, and La Lupina. *Total Eclipse #3* is now scheduled to ship the 25th of October.

In December, *Total Eclipse #4* introduces a new character to the Eclipse Universe and sends our heroes into battle against the time-warping force of Nine-Crocodile's newest scheme.

Total Eclipse is now on sale and retails for $3.95.

Zorro TM Zorro Productions. Art © 1988 Toth

Hardbacks Go Deluxe

Zorro, Krenkel, Sabre Have Limited Editions

Limited edition book fans will have three new prizes to add to their collections come December. Eclipse will be releasing three new hardcovers with small print-runs.

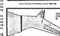
The hardcover of *Sabre: The Tenth Anniversary Edition* will have a print run of only 500 copies. Each will include a pull-out poster and a numbered tip-in plate signed by writer Don McGregor and artist Paul Gulacy. "Orders to distributors will be prorated on this item," says distribution manager Sean Deming. The retail price is $24.95.

The *Alex Toth's Zorro* signed and numbered edition will contain a stark red and black tip-in plate signed in silver by Toth. Limited to just 300 copies, the package will consist of two hardcovers in a matching slipcase. The original colour illustrations from the softcovers are tipped onto the covers of the books, and the slip case has these illustrations stamped in foil. The set will retail for just $69.95.

Swordsmen and Saurians: The Art of Roy Krenkel will be released as a handsome coffee table hardcover with a colour frontispiece not available in the paperback edition. The 144-page book is a deluxe 10 by 13 inch clothbound package. "*Swordsmen and Saurians* will be like the old Scribners books," says publisher Dean Mullaney. "A full-colour plate will be tipped on the front cover and there will be foil stamping on the spine." This limited edition will retail for $39.95.

"Because we can't offer a signed edition of the Krenkel book, we are also preparing an even smaller, more exclusive edition for the true collector," says Mullaney. "Each slipcased copy in that 'ultimate' run will contain a piece of Roy Krenkel original art." Price and packaging details of the "ultimate" edition of *Swordsmen and Saurians* will be announced shortly.

Also still to come are hardcover limited editions of P. Craig Russell's *Illustrated Book of the Opera* and Scott Hampton's adaptation of Robert E. Howard's *Pigeons From Hell*.



Fit To Print

by

Cat Yronwode

THIS IS FIT TO PRINT NUMBER 320: Last week in this space I mused about the transience of memory and the unmarked emergence of new hair care products. Specifically, I posed two questions: What was the first brand of "hair conditioner" and the year it came into being? What do "hair conditioners" actually do to your hair?

Already I have some answers!

Jim Vadeboncoeur came through with the facts. You remember Jim: In addition to being on the editorial board of the *Who's Who of American Comic Books* database, the biggest research effort underway in comics, he's written letters to a number of Eclipse's classic reprint books. *Fans of long tooth and eidetic memory* will also note him in their logbooks as the fellow who located the KYA "Good Guys" promo sheet back in the days of Bobbyann and the famous ashtrays.

Jim is, in short, an Expert. And like most Experts, if he doesn't have the answer himself, he can locate the answer somewhere and photocopy it for you within an hour.

At my mere mention of "the origin and chemistry of hair care products" this man volunteered to send me, by uniformed courier, a complete print-out of *his own file* on this subject. *Naw, I'm pulling your leg.* What he actually said was, "Gee, I think *Consumer Reports* did a thing on that recently. I'll see if I can find it around here someplace and stick a copy in the mail."

While I was waiting for the material from Jim, I conducted my own informal survey of memory and hair care among my co-workers and friends.

What I learned was staggering: Most people under the age of thirty have no memory of life before "hair conditioner." A notable exception to this was my sister, Letitia Clover, who has always had long, luxuriant hair, and takes good care of it. She retains childhood memories of "creme rinse," the product "hair conditioner" supplanted.

Most people aged thirty to forty know there was a time when "hair conditioner" was not one of life's options. Some recall "creme rinse," others do not. Karen Lane, wife of Jim Vadeboncoeur, placed the advent of "hair conditioner" between the late 1960s and mid 1970s. So did my spouse, Dean Mullaney.

Most people over forty whom I surveyed knew little about "hair conditioner" and cared less. Some even used my query as an excuse to whine about the inevitable brevity of life, the vanity of the young, and a belief in some universal conspiracy theory which has as its ultimate goal the depletion of the ozone layer over Antarctica.

But back to *Consumer Reports* and the hard data: Tame Creme Rinse was invented in 1952. As soon as I saw that brand name again I recalled that last week I'd mentioned how negatively I had felt about ads that offered to "tame unruly hair." Evidently it was commercials for Tame which turned me off. Image association with whips and wild tigers in a circus. Ick. My poor hair. (Larry Marder would love this!)

It seems I was not alone in hating the "creme rinse" concept. *Consumer Reports* notes that the change to "hair conditioner" occurred during the mid-1970s, because "market studies had found that most people associated creme rinses with limp, coated hair." Unfortunately CR fails to name the first product bearing the appellation "hair conditioner." Research continues...

CR does, however, list the ingredients found in "hair conditioners." In addition to water, these include oil or "a synthetic resin such as cyclomethicone or dimethicone" (gluck), humectants (propylene glycol, glycerine), proteins, and "perhaps the most significant ingredients," quaternary ammonium compounds. These "quats" carry a slight positive electric charge and combat static electricity.

Some unexpected data emerged from my survey: I learned that I am apparently allergic to "hair conditioner." Remember how I complained about the sensation of heat it produced on my head? Well, nobody else I talked to had ever felt that. Since I feel discomfort no matter what brand of "conditioner" I use, it seems that there is something in the chemistry of "conditioning" which my skin cannot tolerate. How odd. I never think of myself as prone to allergies. Poison oak doesn't send me to the hospital. Hay fever doesn't leave me gasping for air. But "hair conditioner"...life is full of surprises. I thought everyone secretly hated the stuff the way I do. Now I feel so all alone. I think it's the "quats."

Heading this time by MARTY GOLIA.
To see YOUR name in boldface type and your art or lettering here, make FtP logos 8 1/2 inches wide by 3 inches deep and send 'em to catherine yronwode, p.o. box 1099, forestville, california 95436

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Barker Book Tapping Into Top Artists

Cowan, Russell, Bolton, Hampton Leading Line-Up

Newcomers to the comics scene who follow Clive Barker's name to Eclipse's *Tapping The Vein* will, in the first two volumes, be introduced to some of the most powerful artists working in the medium.

Denys Cowan will be tackling "Midnight Meat Train," a tale of ritual slaughter in the subway. Michael Davis, currently working on *E.T.C.* for Piranha Press, will be painting each page of Cowan's line art. "I'm very excited about this pairing," says editor Fred Burke. "Denys and Michael really reinforce each other's creativity. Their work together is going to break new ground."

P. Craig Russell will be adapting "Human Remains," Barker's eloquent story of prostitution, murder, and stolen beauty. "I can't think of anyone better suited to this story," says Burke. "It will be a different sort of subject matter for Craig, I think, but I'm expecting him to really bring home Clive's intent in this story. 'Human Remains' is not just a blood orgy."

"Pig Blood Blues," a startling tale of possession and brutality in a juvenile correction center, will be fully painted by Scott Hampton. "This is the one Scott requested," Burke says, "and he knows his personal strengths better than anyone. Scott's reputation for evocative horror is well-deserved." Hampton's graphic album adaptation of Robert E. Howard's *Pigeons From Hell* will go on sale this fall.

John Bolton is taking on Barker's best-known story, "In The Hills, The Cities," a brilliant parable of men's subjugation by society. "John is justifiably acclaimed for his work in the horror genre, and his clear style will make 'In The Hills' a riveting *tour de force*," Burke says. "Everyone tells me that 'In The Hills,' with its cast of 30,000 protagonists, is impossible to draw. We'll just have to wait and see."

Bolton and Hampton are already hard at work on cover paintings. "The covers have all of the grisly humour and tragic relationships of Barker's best work," Burke says. "On the strength of their covers alone, these books are going to be very good sellers."

Clive Barker's Tapping The Vein will go on sale this spring.

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Acme Expands U.S. Line

Maxwell, Art of John Bolton, Aces In Future

Having found a ready market in the States, Britain's Acme Press will expand its U.S. line this winter. Eclipse continues to distribute Acme Press products, including *Ace* and *Speakeasy*, the well-known comics industry journal from England.

In November, a deluxe edition of Alan Moore's *Maxwell the Magic Cat* will include each of the four previous volumes in a special Maxwell slipcase. "This great offer will retail for just $15.00," says Eclipse distribution manager Sean Deming, "a savings of 25 percent off the cost of the original four books—plus you get the slipcase free!"

The Art of John Bolton is a retrospective focusing on the acclaimed artist's career in comics and other media. The trade paperback will also include a special discussion of Bolton's Marvel graphic album *Someplace Strange*. The album, which includes drawings of Bolton and his family, is the artist's most personal work to date.

It is planned that the 120-page *Art of John Bolton* will have a colour signature and retail for $15.95. "Point it out to *Classic X-Men* readers this December," Deming suggests.

Aces, the popular anthology of European comics, is now monthly. "*Aces* found a surprisingly large market," Deming says. "It's picking up popularity on the newsstand. Sales have more than doubled off of the direct sales market."

Deming says *Aces* is a title that should not be overlooked. "It's in the same format as *Savage Sword of Conan* and appeals to the same sort of reader," he says.

Eclipse will end its own anthology magazine with this fourth issue. "*Merchants of Death* seemed too similar in content, and *Aces* is rapidly taking off," Deming explains.

Art TM and © 1988 Alan Moore

Brancato, Yaqub Iran/Contra Cards Stunning Success

Printing, Cardstock Show High Quality

The ink is dry on Eclipse's first collectible trading cards project, and the results are even better than hoped. "I think retailers are going to be recording *The Iran/Contra Scandal Trading Cards* in huge quantities," says distribution manager Sean Deming. "I only hope we don't run out."

The 36 full-colour 2 1/2 by 3 1/2 inch cards feature biographies by Paul Brancato and paintings by Salim Yaqub. The full set of cards (including George Bush, Fawn Hall, Ronald Reagan, William Casey, and Richard Secord) come in a box respondent with the figure of Colonel Ollie North.

The project was started last September. "I think they look beautiful," says Brancato of the final result of his labour. "The cardstock is really good, and the colours came out beautifully. It was all worth it—definitely."

When Brancato began his research a year ago, he wasn't even sure what he planned to do with it. "I finished the research about May. Then I started writing the cards. I'm very interested in the subject. I'm also working on two or three sequels (related sets of cards), if these sell as well as everybody seems to expect."

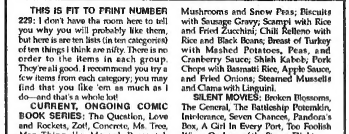
Front page coverage in *The Miami Herald* has helped to push the cards into the national spotlight. "It's front page news there, because a lot of the contras live there," Brancate says.

"I'm overall quite pleased with what I've seen," says artist Yaqub. "They're great. Fantastic. Wonderful.

"I worked on and off for about six months, but I guess it was a couple of days per card," he says of his colour painting.

"I like the Reagan card a lot, and the Somoza card, too," says Yaqub, searching for a favourite. "The set has a lot of variety, but with unity at the same time. Lots of different colours."

"They're also a very timely gift item," notes Deming. The cards, which ship October 11, have had a price change to $7.95. "To get production values like this, it was worth it," Deming says.



THIS IS FIT TO PRINT NUMBER 229: I don't have this month here to tell you why you will probably like them, but here is are ten lists (in ten categories) of ten things I think are nifty. There is no order to the items in each group. They're all good. I recommend you try a few items from each category; you may find that you like 'em as much as I do—and that's a whole lot!

CURRENT, ONGOING COMIC BOOK SERIES: The Question, Love and Rockets, Zot!, Concrete, Ms. Tree, Man-Thing, Iin Marvel Presents!, *American Splendor*, Don Rosa's Donald Duck/Uncle Scrooge stories, Airboy, Elfquest.

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE REPRINT COMIC BOOKS, STRIPS, AND ALBUMS: Toth's Zorro, Steve Canyon, Barks' Donald Duck/Uncle Scrooge, and Rockets, Zot!, Concrete, Ms. Tree, Man-Thing; Iin Marvel Presents!, *American Splendor*, Don Rosa's Donald Duck/Uncle Scrooge stories, Airboy, Elfquest.

OUT-OF-PRINT COMIC BOOKS (SOME HAVE BEEN REPRINTED IN INCOMPLETE FORM OR THE REPRINTS MAY NOW BE OUT-OF-PRINT): Pogo, Jingle Jangle, Dikto's Dr. Strange, Kirby's Fantastic Four, Boy's Ranch, Beck's Captain Marvel, Jake Box Comics, Gerber's Adventure into Fear/Man-Thing, Sek's Young Love/Young Romance, Johnny Comet.

POPULAR MUSICIANS OF THE 1920s AND 1930s: Bing Crosby (through 1933 only), Jimmie Rodgers, Bo Carter, The (original) Carter Family, Artie Shaw, Memphis Minnie, The Hokum Boys, Hoagy Carmichael, Harry "Mac" McClintock, Lonnie Johnson.

POPULAR MUSICIANS OF THE 1940s AND 1950s: Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino, Carl Perkins, Louis Jordan, Kitty Wells, Hank Williams, Marty Robbins, The Coasters, The Everly Brothers.

ENTREES: Two Chicken Tacos with a side order of Green Sauce; Veal Picatta; Shrimp Chow Fun with Black Mushrooms and Snow Peas; Biscuits with Sausage Gravy; Scampi with Rice and Fried Zucchini; Chili Relleno with Rice and Black Beans; Breast of Turkey with Mashed Potatoes, Peas, and Cranberry Sauce; Shish Kabob; Pork Chops with Basmatti Rice, Apple Sauce, and Fried Onions; Steamed Mussells and Clams with Linguini.

SILENT MOVIES: Broken Blossoms, The General, The Battleship Potemkin, Intolerance, Seven Chances, Pandora's Box, A Girl In Every Port, Too Foolish Wives, Orphans of the Storm, Flight.

SOUND MOVIES: Gold Diggers of 1933, Manhattan Melodrama, 42nd Street, Casablanca, Gun Crazy, The Natural, Pickup on South Street, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, You Can't Take It With You, Red Dust, Too Busy To Work.

ACTORS & ACTRESSES: Ingrid Bergman, Jean Harlow, Jimmy Stewart, Robert Redford, Harrison Ford, Myrna Loy, Jean Arthur, William Powell, Katharine Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart.

SPECIES OF PERENNIAL S: Iris, Rose, Day Lily, Daffodil, Creeping Phlox, Lupine, Watsonia, Verbena, Freesia, Sparaxis.

A TINY LITTLE CONTEST: For those who enjoy puzzles, here are ten more really great things, one from each of the ten categories given above. It's up to you to figure out which one belongs under which heading.

The prize: a set of both Alex Toth Zorro volumes in softcover and your name in print in this column to the first person who can correctly assign the following items to their respective categories:

Red Beans and Rice, The Spirit, Bix Biederbecke, Master of Kung Fu (original series), Chuck Berry, Tales of the Beanworld, Gregory Peck, Brief Encounter, Violet, Love Heaven Here.

Send your entries to TEN REALLY GREAT THINGS, ECLIPSE COMICS, P.O. BOX 1099, FORESTVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95436.

Heading this time by **KEN KRAMER.**

To see YOUR name in boldface type and your art or lettering here, make FIT logos 8 1/2 inches wide by 3 inches deep and send ten to catherine yronwode, p.o. box 1099, forestville, california 95436

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TOTAL ECLIPSE

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

We've received such a flood of mail on Total Eclipse, #1 that it seems a shame not to let it see print. So, until you get tired of it, we'll be running your comments here on Page Nine. Thanks for making our tenth anniversary such a success. Now on to the ninth.
—Fred Burke

Dear Everybody,

Where to begin to describe the impact of Total Eclipse #1. Would you believe,

Minnesota, and the winter of 1959-60. Across the street from each other live a pair of boys who share the same age (twelve), the same obsession (comic books), and the same comic book passions for the DC heroes (nobody but KIDS bought Marvel Comics back then). Every week, the two of them hiked up the hill to Ralph's Super Market, and blew their allowances on Flash, Green Lantern, Superman, Superman-Batman, Detective, Action, Adventure, and World's Finest—whatever had hit the rack that week. Then the two of them would troop back down the hill, pop themselves on either family's rugs, and devour each other's comics. More bonding was accomplished across Hickory Street than at any other time since the Hudson Bay Company.

That winter, one of the boys (John) bought a new title, featuring the combined exploits of most of the favored favorites, Superman, Batman, Flash, Green Lantern—as well as two "back up" heroes (Aquaman and Jonn Jonzz), and (yechh) Wonder Woman. Never before had so many current superheroes appeared in the same comic book, and the adventure for the newly formed Justice League of America became heavily borrowed by the other boy, but never in it's—John knew "prime ha" when he saw it, and asked the outrageous price of THREE comics for his ONE! No way, Jose (or, rather, Juan).

Until Brave and the Bold #28, crossovers were irregular, and generally plotted as last panel surprise endings (except, of course, for the regular Batman-Superman team-up in World's Finest). For that reason, these particular issues were highly prized, and even more heavily in demand. Beyond the first appearance of the JLA, not much thought was given to whether most of DC's heroes shared the same universe, or even the same time-frame. All of that changed with the JLA, and cross-overs began to be the rule, rather than the exception. For those of us who had read comics during the "Silver Age" it was also a shame. We more surprise heroes in the last panel, we more heavily sought after issues; and we more independent adventures.

DC had realized, as a result of the Justice League of America, that crossover issues sold very well; thus, an increase in crossovers would sell even better. And then came the Earth-3, Earth-S, etc., crossovers, the Marvel crossovers; and multi-issue, multi-title crossovers—until the DC universe finally exploded upon itself in the biggest crossover extravaganza of all time—the Crisis!

While the Crisis attempted to draw up continuity after years of crossovers, it merely fusted the necessity for even more interbocking stories, creating a difficult choice for contemporary readers—at today's prices, what titles can be dropped without losing the threads of a story? In all fairness, why must a story, intrinsic to the plot of one comic, be continued within the pages of another book, and then completed (hopefully) in yet another title? While the publisher's announced intent may be to "satisfy numberless requests" for such crossovers, the bottom line has essentially been "lets number them out of their last buck again."

All of which is the long way around to saying that Total Eclipse #1 reminds me of those seemingly naive days of the early Justice League stories. While previous Eclipse crossovers have been (for the most part) ballyhooed in advance, none of them have been "must reads" to follow the continuity in other books. Total Eclipse, on the other hand, is the ultimate crossover for the Eclipse characters, and will probably have as much impact upon each of them as did the Crisis for the DC heroes. Knowing in advance your aversion to overindulgence as far as crossovers are concerned, I realize that Total Eclipse is a purposeful exception, and not the beginning of another publisher's crossover glut. I want to feel the same way I did when I was twelve—that a crossover was rare, and special, and laden with last panel surprises. Total Eclipse is a treasure, not only as "novelty," but because it has been created by people less concerned with reaping profits than with drawing a rare and damn good yarn. So far, an disappointment to me from the side of Hickory Street.

And, if you're reading this, old pal John, I'm finally ready to trade for Brave and the Bold #28. Same terms, same condition. Feel free to call collect.

Up the revolution
D. Kingsley Hahn
309 Dayton Ave., Apt. 204
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

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The startling origin story from *Catwoman: Year One*, scripted by Mindy Newell with art by J.J. Birch and Michael Bair.

DC: GIFFEN ON *L.E.G.I.O.N.*; CATWOMAN; DC TAKES WEEK OFF

Is there life after *Invasion!*? The answer is a resounding "YES" for *Justice League International*'s KEITH GIFFEN. In addition to his duties on *JLI* and *Legion Of Super-Heroes*, GIFFEN will be launching a new project for January 1989, entitled (oddly enough) *L.E.G.I.O.N. '89*. GIFFEN saw that after the breakup of the Green Lantern Corp and the events of *Millennium* and *Invasion!*, this sector of the DC Universe was in dire need of an intergalactic police force. Enter **Vril Dox**, the son of the new **Brainiac** and the ancestor of super-hero **Brainiac 5**. **Vril** also sees the need for law and order at DC, so he sets about recruiting a new group of heroes to do the job. That group is **L.E.G.I.O.N. '89** (or '90, '91, '92 . . . , as the years progress). Joining GIFFEN on the book, "sort of a *Hill Street Blues* meets *Star Wars*," is co-writer ALAN GRANT, penciller BARRY KITSON, and inker MIKE DeCARLO. *L.E.G.I.O.N. '89* #1 ships January 3 for $1.50.

In the wake of FRANK MILLER's interpretation of **Catwoman** in *Batman: Year One*, editor DENNY O'NEIL decided to pursue the story with *Catwoman: Year One*. The story is written by *American Flagg!* scripter MINDY NEWELL, and the mature themes in the story are definitely not for the young or squeamish. Pencils for the four-issue mini-series are contributed by J.J. BIRCH and MICHAEL BAIR inks the work. Issue #1, guest-starring the original **Wildcat**, ships December 20 for $1.50.

All-new material starts in ALAN MOORE and DAVID LLOYD's *V for Vendetta* #8 (of 10), shipping December 13 for $2.00.

A new creative team starts *Doom Patrol* as of issue #19. GRANT (*Animal Man*) MORRISON writes the book in a new direction after the death of one member in *Invasion!* He is assisted in the effort by new penciller RICHARD CASE and inker CARLOS GARZON. The "New Format" book ships January 3, beside *The Shadow* #20 in which, at last—**The Shadow** is back! Find out how in the story by ANDY HELFER and KYLE BAKER.

Bonus Book #13, by DAVID LEVIN and DEAN HASPIEL, ships December 13, as part of *Justice League International* #24, a special, double-sized, $1.50, two-feature second anniversary issue by GIFFEN, DeMATTEIS, MAGUIRE, SEARS, and RUBINSTEIN. This issue features a regular *JLI* story *plus* the introduction of another new group of super-heroes, **Justice League Europe**. *(Read the* Invasion! *article in this issue of* Amazing Heroes *for more details on Mr. Giffen's plans for the 'League.—BMW)*

Secret Origins #37 presents the origins of the **Legion of Substitute Heroes**, by TY TEMPLETON, who also produced the cover; and **Doctor Light**, by CRAIG BOLDMAN and MIKE PAROBECK. The book ships December 20 for $1.50.

Plastic Man #4 is the final issue of the series by PHIL FOGLIO, HILARY BARTA, and JOHN NYBERG. And *Black Orchid* #3 is the conclusion to that story by NEIL GAIMAN with art by DAVE McKEAN.

The covers to *Action Comics Weekly* #637-640 feature, respectively, **Speedy**, by JEROME MOORE; **The Demon**, by JACK KIRBY; the **Phantom Lady**, by KEVIN NOWLAN; and **Wild Dog**, by RICK BURCHETT.

Due to "unavoidable delays" with *Cosmic Odyssey*, **New Gods** #1 has been postponed.

And finally, to make everyone's holiday season a bit easier—except, of course, the comic book junkies—DC COMICS is scheduling a Christmas season skip week. No books will ship from DC the week of December 27. ●

Alien audition from Keith Giffen's new *L.E.G.I.O.N. '89*—art by Kitson and DeCarlo.

COMICO SIGNS *TROUBLE WITH GIRLS*—CHRISTMAS SPECIAL EN ROUTE

Jacobs and Jones' *The Trouble With Girls*.

Publisher PHIL LASORDA has announced that COMICO has signed WILL JACOBS and GERARD JONES to publish their action/humor comic, ***The Trouble With Girls***. LASORDA stated, "*Girls* is the type of book that any publisher would love to have under his wing . . . and we're very grateful for the support and confidence that MR. JACOBS, MR. JONES, and crew have exhibited by choosing COMICO as their new home."

"Obviously, we're very happy about the move," said co-creator/co-writer JACOBS. "We enjoyed working with the people at ETERNITY, and they did an awful lot to get *Girls* noticed in this business. But switching to color was an opportunity we couldn't pass up."

"Color will be perfect for this book," added JONES, the other half of the co-creator/writer team. "The wild adventures and the far-flung settings of **Lester Girls** cry out for it. And our artist, TIM HAMILTON, has the sort of clean, open style that color will really bring to life."

ETERNITY COMICS will continue to publish ***The Trouble With Girls*** at least through issue **#14**. The release for the first COMICO issue is tentatively scheduled for early 1989.

The *Comico Christmas Special #1* is a 40-page edition featuring five traditional to not-so-traditional yuletide tales written by DOUG WHEELER. The cover is illustrated by DAVE STEVENS, and each story is illustrated by a different art team from the roster of STEVE RUDE, AL WILLIAMSON, TIM SALE, BERNIE MIREAULT, KEN HOLEWCZYNSKI, CHRIS WARNER, and BILL WILLINGHAM. The ***CCS #1*** ships December 6, at $2.50.

The ***Jezebel Jade*** mini-series ends with issue **#3**, "The Speech of Bones," written by WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS and pencilled, inked & painted by ADAM KUBERT. It ships from COMICO on December 13 for $1.75.

MIKE W. BARR's ***The MAZE Agency #1*** starts the new monthly series December 13, with "The Adventure of the Rogue's Gallery," pencilled by ADAM HUGHES, inked by RICK MAGYAR, and colored by JULIE LACQUEMENT.

The final issue (#4) of Baron's *Ginger Fox*.

Ginger Fox also concludes her mini-series December 13 by quitting Peppertree Studios in ***Ginger Fox #4***, "Chapter Red," written by MIKE BARON with art by the PANDER BROTHERS.

And finally, **Gumby** and **Pokey** return to comics with an all-new, 40-page adventure written by STEVE PURCELL and illustrated by ARTHUR ADAMS. The ***Gumby Winter Fun Special #1*** ships December 20 for $2.50. ●

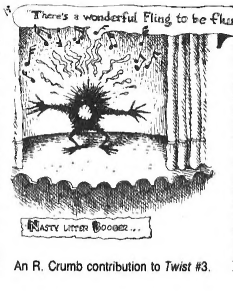
OTHER: LARSON HIATUS; CRUMB TWISTS; EAGLE AWARD; JEOPARDY!

ROBERT CRUMB has been added to the list of contributors in place of DREW FRIEDMAN for *Twist #3*, the humor anthology shipping in October from KITCHEN SINK PRESS. Also in the line-up are: J.D. KING, R.O. BLECHMAN, HARVEY KURTZMAN, DAVID LEVINE, RICHARD SALA, PETER BAGGE & DAN CLOWES.

"The Far Side" cartoonist GARY LARSON will take a 14-month leave of absence as of October 30. LARSON plans to travel and recharge his creative batteries. While he's away, UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE will distribute his cartoons from the early 1980's, when "The Far Side" appeared in fewer than 30 newspapers across the country.

The next "Comic Book" category on the television show ***Jeoparody!*** will air November 1, 1988.

And now, having saved the best comics news for last: ***AMAZING HEROES MAGAZINE*** was given an "Eagle" award at September's United Kingdom Comic Art Convention for the category of "Favourite Specialist Comics Publication 1987." Many thanks to the British fans who voted for us. The award means very much to former editor KEVIN DOOLEY and the rest of the ***AH*** staff, as well.—*EDS (old and new)*



An R. Crumb contribution to *Twist #3*.

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COMING DISTRACTIONS!

AARDVARK VANAHEIM

☐ **CEREBUS #115.** Adventures of Cerebus the extraordinary aardvark, by **Sim & Gerhard**. [*B & W comic; $2.00; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **PUMA BLUES BOOK ONE—Watch That Man Graphic Novel.** 288 page graphic novel reprinting the first twelve issues of **Michael Zulli & Stephen Murphy's** *Puma Blues*, plus introduction by **Deve Sim**. [*B & W graphic novel; $14.95; ships in Nov.*]

AIRCEL COMICS

☐ **DRAGONFORCE #7.** Vempires visit Vancouver. By **Dale Keown**. [*Color comic; $2.30; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **KIKU SAN #1.** Kiku San tries to escape his past in peaceful Elfheim. By **Barry Blair**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **SAMURAI #5.** Simon and Alex search the sewers for Samurei and Black Dove. By **Blair & Patrick McEown**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **WARLOCK 5 #19.** One of the Guerdians regains his lost memory. By **Gordon Derry & Denis Beauvale**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships Nov.*]

☐ **WARLOCKS #5.** The warlock onslaught, by **McKeown, Blair & Somerville**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

AMERICOMICS

☐ **CAVE GIRL #1.** Reprinting **Bob Powell's** classic jugle beauty, plus e feeture index by **Ed Lane**, a photo erticle on **Victoria Vetri**, and *Nyoka The Jungle Girl*. [*Color comic; $2.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **FEMFORCE PIN-UP PORTFOLIO Vol. II.** 44 pages of pin-up art by **Heike, Lux, Adame, Black, Willingham & Mignola**. [*B & W comic; $2.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **TOM MIX WESTERNS #1.** 35-yeerold Tom Mix classics, plus some of **John Severin**'s "Billy The Kid." [*Color comic; $2.95; ships in Nov.*]

BLACKTHORNE COMICS

☐ **BATTLETECH #11.** Phylticia discovers the reasons behind Bruder's Suicide, By **Dragen Flaesc & Scooter Tidwell**. [*B & W comic; $1.75; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST IN 3-D #1.** The spookticular escepades of Casper and Wendy in 3-D. [*3-D color comic; $2.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **DICK TRACY WEEKLY #62-65.** Trecy closes in on Miss Eggheed, Chicory, and Lobster Pointe. By **Chester Gould**. [*B & W comic; $2.00; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **G.I. JOE IN 3-D #1.** The Joes and COBRA fight side by side to prevent World Wer III. By **John Stephenson & Adrian Moro**. [*3-D color comic; $2.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **HARVEY "FLIP BOOKS" #1.** With Hot Stuff, the little devil and Stumbo, the gient. [*B & W comic; $2.00; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **JUNGLE COMICS #4.** Sheena struggles to make sense of murder. By **Bruce Jones & Donnis Jupiter**. [*B & W comic; $2.00; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **SOLOMON KANE IN 3-D #2.** Solomon resists the "Sands of Doom," by **Weiss, Weiss & Barras**. [*3-D color comic; $2.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **TO DIE FOR #1.** Drecula is alive and well end stalking Los Angeles. Adapted from movie. By **Lance Hampton & Dell Barras** Studio. [*B & W or 3-D comic; $2.00 or $2.50; ships in Nov.*]

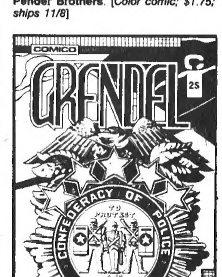
☐ **WEREWOLF #4.** "The Wolf That Thought He Was A Man," by **Hampton & Jim McDermott**. [*B & W comic; $2.00; ships in Nov.*]

BOOKNUT PRESS

☐ **THE ADAPTERS #2.** Super sci-fi edventure.[*Color comic; $2.00; ships in Nov.*]

COMICO

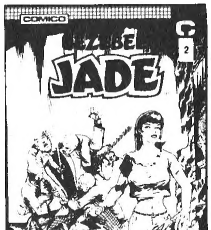
☐ **GINGER FOX #3.** The Peppertree Board of Directors plots against Ginger in "Chapter Blue," by **Mike Baron & The Pender Brothers**. [*Color comic; $1.75; ships 11/8*]



☐ **GRENDEL #25.** The Pope reinstates the Inquisition, while the "Devil at Large" makes plans. By **Matt Wagner, John K. Snyder, Jey Geldhof & Joe Matt**. [*Painted color; $1.75; ships 11/1*]

☐ **JEZEBEL JADE #2 (of 3).** Race Ban-

non and Jezebel Jade run like rats "Into The Maze." By **William Messner-Loebs & Adam Kubert**. [*Color comic; $2.00; ships 11/8*]



☐ **JUSTICE MACHINE #23.** Part five of the Earth/Georwell war is "Too Hot To Handle." By **Doug Murray, Mike Guatovich, Dell Barras & Tom Vincent**. [*Color comic; $1.75; ships 11/1*]

☐ **TROLLORDS #1.** A would-be author contemplates ending his life. By **Scott Beaderstadt, Paul Fricke, Len Strazewski & Ray Murtaugh**. [*Color comic; $1.75; ships 11/1*]

DC COMICS

☐ **ACTION COMICS WEEKLY #632-634.** Presenting BLACK CANARY, by Wright, DuBurke & Marcos; BLACKHAWK, by Pasko & Burchatt; GREEN LANTERN, by Owsley & Bright; NIGHTWING AND SPEEDY, by Wolfman, Wilkerson & Mandrake; THE PHANTOM STRANGER, by Kupperberg & Carillo; and SUPERMAN, by Stern, Swan & Anderson. COVERS by **Jeff Butler & George Freeman**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 11/8, 11/15, 11/22*]

☐ **BATMAN #429.** Part 4 of 4 to "A Death In The Family," in which Batman fights the Joker for the lives in the United Nations. By **Starlin, Aparo & DeCarlo**. Cover by **Mike Mignola**. [*Color comic; 75¢; ships 11/22*]

☐ **BEST OF THE BRAVE & THE BOLD #6 (of 6).** Reprints featuring BATMAN AND THE (OLD) TEEN TITANS, by **Haney & Adams**; THE VIKING PRINCE, by **Haney & Kubert**; and ROBIN HOOD, by **Kanigher & Heath** Cover by **Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez**. [*Color comic; $2.50; ships 11/15*]

☐ **CHECKMATE! #12.** Checkmate combats an attack on the U.S. Space Program. By **Kupperberg, Erwin & Vey**. Cover by **Gil Kane**. [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 11/15*]

☐ **CHRISTMAS WITH THE SUPERHEROES #1.** 96-page collection reprinting the greatest DC Christmas stories ever told. Cover by **John Byrne**. [*Color comic; $2.95; ships 11/15*]

☐ **DOC SAVAGE #5.** Doc Savage prevents a war between the Super Powers. Interior by **O'Neil, Whigham & Montano**. Cover by **Adam & Andy Kubert**. [*Color comic; $1.75; ships 11/15*]

☐ **DRAGONLANCE #4.** Riva and Vandar face Lord Soth and Kitiara for the final time. By **Mishkin, Randall & Elliot**. [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 11/22*]

☐ **FIRESTORM THE NUCLEAR MAN #81.** Firestorm heads to Moscow to discover the fate of Mikhail's family in the INVASION! By **Ostrander, Grindberg & Da LaRosa**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/15*]

☐ **FLASH #22.** Wally West is the guest of honor at a birthday party in Cube. By **Messner-Loebs, LaRocque & Mahlstedt**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/15*]

☐ **GREEN ARROW #14.** Ollie gets tired of being hunted. By **Grell, Hannigan & Giordano**. [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 11/22*]

☐ **HAYWIRE #6.** Steve is held captive by The Combine. By **Fleisher & Giarrano**. [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 11/22*]

☐ **HELLBLAZER #15.** Constantine's idyllic life is shattered by the calvary in part 2 of 12 in "The Fear Machine," by **Delano, Rayner, Buckingham & Dave McKean**. [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 11/22*]

☐ **INVASION! #2 (of 3).** "Battleground Earth!" By **Giffen, Mantlo, McFarlane, Russell, Gordon & Rubinstein**. [*Color comic; $2.95; ships 11/8*]

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL #23.** The JLI decides to take a vacation. By **Giffen, DeMatteis, Templeton & Rubinstein**. [*Color comic; 75¢; ships 11/15*]

☐ **LEGION OF SUPER HEROES #56.** Blok, Shadow Lass, and Mon-El are trapped by their own hope. By **Levitz, Giffen, Gordon & Lightle**. [*Color comic; $1.75; ships 11/22*]

☐ **MANHUNTER #9.** Manhunter deals with cleaning up Cube, an angry Flash, and a kidnapped Fidel Castro. By **Ostrander, Yale, Rice & Marcos**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/15*]

☐ **MISTER MIRACLE #1.** Mister Miracle, Big Barda and Oberon move out to the suburbs, and their relatives from Apokolips follow along. By **DeMatteis & Gibson**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/22*]

☐ **NEW GODS #1.** The New Gods deal with the aftermath of from *Cosmic Odyssey*. By **Starlin, Collins & Russell**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 11/15*]

☐ **PLASTIC MAN #3 (of 4).** Woozy joins a cult in "California Schemin'," by **Foglio, Barta & Nyberg**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/22*]

☐ **THE PRISONER, BOOK D (of D).** New light is shed on the final episode of the *Prisoner* television series in "Departure," by **Motter & Askwith**. [*Color comic; $3.50; ships 11/22*]

☐ **SECRET ORIGINS #36.** With the origins of GREEN LANTERN, by **Owsley, Bright & Marzan**; POISON IVY, by **Gaiman & Buckingham**; and TOM KALMAKU, by **Jones & Staton**. Cover by **Eduardo Barreto**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 11/22*]

☐ **SUPERMAN #27.** Superman fights the INVASION for the sake of his adopted world, and The Guardian confronts Gangbuster. By **Stern, Gammill, Breeding & Janke**. [*Color comic; 75¢; ships 11/22*]

☐ **V FOR VENDETTA #7 (of 10).** Evey begins to learn some of V's secrets. By **Moore & Lloyd**. Painted cover. [*Full color process; $2.00; ships 11/8*]

☐ **WONDER WOMAN #26** Diana helps with the cleanup after the INVASION! By **Perez, Marrinan & Blyberg**. Plus BONUS BOOK #12, "Legends of the Amazons," by **Joyner & LeChance**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/15*]

☐ **YOUNG ALL-STARS #22.** The rematch between the Young All-Stars and Axis America in part 2 of 5 in "Atom and Evil" saga by **Thomas, Thomas, Harris & Downs**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 11/15*]

EASTERN COMICS

☐ **DEMON WARRIOR #12.** The Demon Warrior recalls his unhappy childhood. By **Jae-Hak Lee & Franz Henkel**. [*B & W comic; $1.75; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **FORBIDDEN KINGDOM #9.** Sain infiltrates the enemy stronhold. By **Sung-Nam Ha & Henkel**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **BTURM THE TROOPER #1.** A secret agent speaks softly and carries a BIG gun (in place of his right arm). [*Color comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **THE UNTOUCHABLES #17-20.** Korean adventures in baseball. Weekly, by **Hyun-Sai Lee & Henkel**. [*B & W comic; 75¢; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **THE WILD #3-4.** Haesu learns about what happened while he was in prison. By **Tae-san Chang**. [*B & W comic; $1.75; ships in Nov.*]

ECLIPSE COMICS

☐ **ACES #5.** The further adventures of Dieter Lumpen in "Dangerous Games"; "Airmail," by **Micheluzzi**; and "Hollywood Eye", by **Riviere, Bocquet & Barthet**. [*B & W comic; $2.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **APPLEBEED #3.** Daunan and Briareo's appearance in Olympus pushes the city's political situation toward critical mass. By **Shiro Masamune**. [*B & W comic; $2.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **AREA 88 #36.** Taeko falls victim to a murder plot, and an airliner crashes into Tokyo Bay. By **Kaoru Shintani**. [*B & W comic; $1.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **FUSION #12.** The crew of the Tsunami discovers a mysterious artifact in "The Devastator Affair, Part Two," by **Reaves, Dowling & Gallacci**. Plus **Macklin & Dowling's** "Weasel Patrol." [*B & W comic; $2.00; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **KAMUI #36-37.** Kamui fights ninja and Utsuse to the bitter end. By **Sanpei Shirato**. [*B & W comic; $1.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **THE LAST KISS. John Watkiss'** comic book adaptations of "Edgeman," **Poe's** "The Black Cat," and **D.H. Lawrence's** "The Rocking Horse Winner." [*B & W comic; $3.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **XENON #23.** Xenon and Red Beard's battle is joined by Tono, and someone's about to die. By **Masaomi Kanzaki**. [*B & W comic; $1.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **ZOT #23.** 9-Jack-9 launches an electrifying plan for the ultimate revenge. By **Scott McCloud**. Back-up by **Matt Feazell**. [*B & W comic; $2.00; ships in Nov.*]

ETERNITY COMICS

☐ **ARGONAUTS #3.** Someone is trying to kill the Argonauts in "Night Raiders," by **Spangler & Ollifie**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

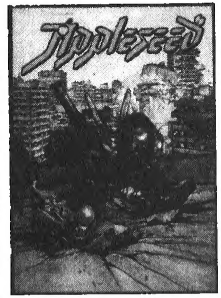
☐ **BUSHIDO #3.** Miki experiences a surge of power before an attack by the Yakuza. By **Bruce Balfour, Lee Hernandez & Martin Thomas**. [*Color comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **CAT TALES 3-D #1.** Felix the Cat in 3-D, by **Pat Sullivan**. [*3-D color comic; $1.35; ships in Nov.*]

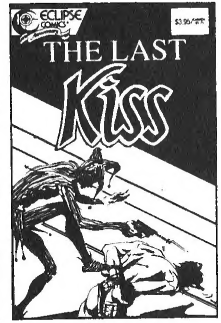
☐ **COSMIC HEROES #3.** Buck and Wilma inspect the damage caused by the Doomed Comet. By **Philip Nowlan & Dick Calkins**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **CRIME CLASSICS #5.** The Shadow investigates a nest of spies in a Caribbean prison colony. By **Maxwell Grant & Vernon Greene**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **DARK WOLF #9.** Dark Wolf is shot by Irish terrorists. By **Jones & Burcham**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]



☐ **DINOSAURS FOR HIRE—FALL CLASSIC #1.** The Dinosaurs are called in to capture the King of Rock & Roll—returned from the grave for revenge. By **Mason, Tully, Roberts & Hagen**. [*B & W comic; $2.25; ships in Nov.*]



☐ **EX-MUTANTS: Shattered Earth Chronicles #7.** The Ex-Mutants stand trial for murder. By **Paul O'Connor, Michael Shaw, Jim Palmiotti & John Arthur Williams**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **50'S TERROR #2.** Five more tales of Pre-Code terror. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **FIST OF GOD #4.** Mick Taggert discovers the remains of Karim Kahn. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **FRIGHT #6.** Horror anthology for MATURE READERS. Cover by **Tom Baxa**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **GAMBIT #2.** An assassination attempt against Sean leads to a chase aboard the Starship Gambit. By **Scott Bieser**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **NEW HUMANS ANNUAL #1.** The New Humans discover a civilization where dinosaurs still rule. By **Paul O'Connor, Myke Maldonado & Thomas Baxa**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **NINJA HIGH SCHOOL: SPECIAL EDITION.** Expanded version of *NHS #3*. Cover by **Ben Dunn**. [*B & W comic; $2.25; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **ROBOTECH II: THE SENTINELS #1.** Ten years after MACROSS . . . the further adventures of Rick Hunter & Lisa Hayes. By **Tom Mason, Chris Ulm & Jason Waltrip**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **SHATTERED EARTH #1.** Anthology series by **Ron Lim, Jim Balent, O'Connor & Maldonado**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **SHERLOCK HOLMES #7.** Professor Moriarty plans to unleash the Plague in London. By **Edith Meiser & Frank Giacoia**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **SPICY TALES: A Naughty Anthology #4.** Pre-code action and adventure with "Dan Turner" and "Sally the Sleuth." [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **VICTIMS #4.** Josey and Anne are captured by a dwarf Nazi. By **Heweston, Suso & Balent**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **WAR OF THE WORLDS #1.** The martians land again in an "all-new" adaptation of the **H.G. Wells** classic. Adaptation by **Scott Finley & Brooks Hagan**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **WILD KNIGHTS: Shattered Earth Chronicles #8.** Ha'Mercy and the Red Kross return as three main characters die in "Crusade," by **Evan Dorkin, John Gallagher & Dean Hubenig**. [*B & W comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

FIRST COMICS

☐ **BADGER #45.** Dr. Buick Riviera is

back, end IBOB'e got him. By **Mike Baron & Ron Lim**. [*Color comic; $1.95; ships 10/26*]

☐ **DREADSTAR #41.** Venth's plens for spece adventure fail apert. By **Starlin, Peter David & Angel Medina**. [*Color comic; $1.95; ships 11/4*]

☐ **EVANGELINE #12.** By **Cherlee Dixon, Jim Balent & Ricardo Villagran**. [*Color comic; $1.95; ships 10/26*]

☐ **GRIMJACK #56.** Grimjack is hired to find e child with the power to destroy Cynosure. By **John Ostrander & Flint Henry**. [*Color comic; $1.95; ships 11/4*]

☐ **LONE WOLF AND CUB #19.** More in the life of a samurai assessin, by **Kuzo Koike & Goseki Kojima**. Cover painting by **Bill Sienkiewicz**. [*B & W comic; $2.50; ships 10/26.*]

☐ **NEXUS #54.** Dave and Sundre enter Kreed's vault in search of weapons to halt the invasion of Ylum. By **Mike Baron, Paul Smith & John Nyberg**. [*Color comic; $1.95; ships 10/26*]

☐ **WHISPER #22.** Bain's reign of terror continues, while Parker and Ashley close in for the kill. By **Steven Grant & Spyder**. [*Color comic; $1.95; ships 11/4*]

GLADSTONE COMICS

☐ **DISNEY ALBUM: UNCLE SCROOGE #14.** "The Money Well," by **Carl Barks**. [*Color comic; $5.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **DONALD DUCK #270.** Stories from Denmark end Holland. And "The Hockey Champ." [*Color comic; 95¢; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **MICKEY AND DONALD #9.** 1948 edition of the Firestone giveaways, by **Carl Barks & Bill Wright**. [*Color comic; 95¢; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **MICKEY MOUSE #245.** "Brave Little Teilor," by **Floyd Gottfredson & Manuel Gonzalee** [*Color comic; 95¢; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **WALT DISNEY'S COMICS & STORIES #537.** Duck by **Barks**, L'il Bad Wolf & Chipmonks by **Jack Bradbury**, and e Mouse by **Peul Murray**. Cover by **Welt Kelly**. [*Color comic; 95¢; ships in Nov.*]

HERO COMICS

☐ **CAPTAIN THUNDER AND BLUE BOLT—BOOK ONE.** Collecting the original series in a graphic novel by **Thomas, Thomee, Barras & Cruz**. [*Color grephic novel; $9.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **CHAMPIONS #14.** The true origin of **Dark Malice** end the neer-destruction of Olympus. By **Mellonee, McDonnell & Barras**. [*Color comic; $1.95; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **FLARE #3.** Sparkplug, "The Adventures of the Sky Marshail" end "Retribution." [*Color comic; $2.75; ships in Nov.*]

JADEMAN

☐ **BLOOD SWORD #4.** Hero leame lethai fighting technique in prison and sete out to test them in bettle. By **Me Wing Sing & Mike Baron**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **DRUNKEN FIST #4.** Chek Fei and The invincibie Swordsman compeie lo prove fighting superiority, and Porky gains new powers. By **Tony Wong & Baron**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **FORCE OF THE BUDDHA'S PALM #4.** The egents of Fire and Weter find horrible death in the Floral Peiace. By **Wong & Baron**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **ORIENTAL HEROES #4.** Gold Dregon and Guy invade the pirates' stronghold. By **Wong & Baron**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships in Nov.*]

LEUNG PUBLICATIONS

☐ **4-D MONKEY #1.** 4-D, Ninja Flounder end Karate Pig. [*Color comic; $1.80; ships in Nov.*]

☐ **YIN FEI, THE CHINESE NINJA #2.** Contiest issue. [*B & W comic; $1.50; ships in Nov.*]

MARVEL COMICS

☐ **ALF #13.** Alf becomes e racecar driver in "Racetreck of my Tears," by **Gallagher, Menak & M.Severin**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/10*]

☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #68.** New writer **James Hudnell** re-defines Aiphe Flight. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 11/10*]

☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #313.** The INFERNO enhances Doc Connors' Lizerd condition. By **Michelinia & McFerlane**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/10*]

☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #351.** Guest starring Nick Fury. By **Gruenwaid, Dwyer & Milgrom**. [*Color comic; 75¢; ships 11/10*]

☐ **CONAN THE KING #51.** The "Deeth of Prince Conn" mystery continues. By **Oweley, Iaherwood, Bleuetain, Eaglesheim & Kaluta**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 11/3*]

☐ **DAREDEVIL #264.** Deredevil battles e demon from the INFERNO. By **Nocenti, Romita Jr. & Williemson**. [*Color comic; 75¢; ships 11/3*]

☐ **DINO-RIDERS #1.** Toy-line comic of heroes in touch with fossil fuel. By **Caragone & K. Jones**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 10/26*]

☐ **D.P.7 #29.** A paranormal C.I.A. assassin comes to terminate the femele members of D.P.7. By **Gruenwald, Ryan & Bulandi**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 11/10*]

☐ **EXCALIBUR #6.** Medelyne Prior arrives from the pages of *X-Men*. By **Claremont, Davis & Neary**. [*Color comic; $1.50; ships 11/3*]

☐ **G.I. JOE EUROPEAN MISSIONS #6.** Hewk end Flint rescue a bomber from COBRA. [*Color comic; $1.75; ships 11/3*]

☐ **G.I. JOE SPECIAL MISSIONS #19.** The Joes get picked up in Vietnam. By **Hama, Trimpe, Mushynsky & Wagner**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/3*]

☐ **HEATHCLIFF #31.** "The Little Dickens," by **Gallagher, Kramer & Roettcher**. [*Color comic; $1.00; ships 11/10*]

☐ **MARVEL COMICS #14.** Featuring BLACK PANTHER (part 2) in search of hie mother, by **McGregor, Colan & Pelmer**; COLOSSUS (part 5), still battling the C.I.A., by **Nocenti, Leonardi & Russelt**; NOMAD fighting drug dealers end the U.S. Government, by **Nicieza, Alexander & Potts**; and SPEEDBALL, by **Duffy & Ditko**. Cover by **Javier Saltares**. [*Color comic; $1.25; ships 11/3*]

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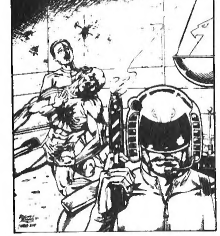

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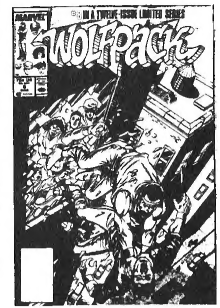

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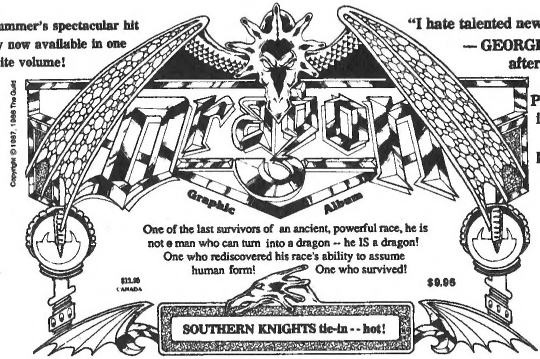

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JULIE: *What exactly is Missing Beings?*

HENRY: Didn't you read all of SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #7, #8, and #9? Shame, shame, shame. *(Laughter.)* Missing Beings originally appeared as a backup series in SOUTHERN KNIGHTS, and I've wanted to do it in its own book ever since then, and we just never quite managed to have everything work out so that we could do that; *but* I think we're finally going to manage to get the book out all on its own. Missing Beings officially is Missing Beings, Inc. This is far in the future when mankind has spread to the stars and met many an alien race, so you can no longer say "missing person," you have to say "missing being." And Missing Beings, basically, is a company that for a fee will find someone who's missing.

The story is set around three characters; Tristan Furreel, who is the head of the branch that we deal with — they branch out into frontier worlds; his assistant Tracy Arden, who actually happens to be Bianca's sister; and their computer, Teak. Teak is as far as I know the only practicing homosexual artificial intelligence in the comic-book industry. This is done kind of tongue in cheek, at least parts of it.

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From an English Country Garden

The British Team of Dave McKean & Neil Gaiman Talk About *Black Orchid* and Other Upcoming Projects.

Dave McKean

Interviewed by Andy Mangels

As artist on DC's Black Orchid *series, Dave McKean was bowling over fans and pros alike at the 1988 San Diego Comic-Con. The few people who knew his earlier work (self-professedly Sienkiewicz inspired) were amazed at how rich and incredibly beautiful his painted pages were. Primarily known in America for his evocative* Hellblazer *covers, McKean is a relative unknown. Britishers are more familiar with his work through the* Violent Cases Graphic Novel, *but only slightly more. McKean seems to have sprung forth from nowhere already a fullblown and accomplished comic artist.*

Dave McKean himself is soft-spoken, with none of the usual arrogance that artists of his talent usually possess. Meeting him and his partner, Clare, at the Comic-Con was one of the many fun things that happened there. After we had set up four different interview times, it became apparent that not only was he nice, but he was being kept busy at the Con by DC and hundreds of admiring fans.

With Black Orchid *(and the release of* Violent Cases*), McKean will make his presence felt in the American field, and I predict that he'll become one of the "sought-after-artistes" within no time. Let us hope that he doesn't pull himself away from comics as so many of the other "artistes" have done. Talking to him on a parking garage roof in sunny San Diego, that seemed the farthest thing from his mind.*

AMAZING HEROES: *Dave, you kind of sprung up out of nowhere on the American comic scene, with your covers for* Hellblazer. *I understand you've only been around for a short while on the British comic scene as well. How did you get your start in comics? What have you done over in Britain that we might not know about over here?*

DAVE McKEAN: I started after leaving college—literally, it was like two weeks after I left college. I got a call from Leigh Baulch who works at Titan Books. Leigh was getting together an English magazine called *Borderline*, which never quite made it. It was another one of those black-and-white magazines which had great intentions, but never actually got anywhere. Through that I met Neil Gaiman, and

See "McKean," page 29.

Neil Gaiman

Interviewed by Peter Sanderson

As yet the name of British comics writer Neil Gaiman may not be widely known among comics readers in the United States, but he is about to make his debut as a writer in American comics on three major fronts: DC's Black Orchid *Prestige Format mini-series, illustrated by Gaiman's frequent collaborator Dave McKean [see facing page], DC's new regular* Sandman *series, illustrated by Sam Kieth and Mike Dringenberg, and Eclipse's ongoing* Miracleman *series, on which Gaiman succeeds his friend Alan Moore.*

So far Gaiman's best-known work in comics is his collaboration with Dave McKean on Violent Cases, *a graphic novel that takes the form of an adult's reminiscences about his encounters as a child with an osteopath who claimed to have been associated with American gangsters.*

Gaiman's interest in comics began with his fascination with the Batman *TV show at the age of six. When he was seven he discovered American comic books, which he continued to read as a child. His interest in comics lapsed in the mid-'70s, and he was working as a journalist and as a writer of books and short stories when he came across Moore's* Swamp Thing *in the '80s. Pleased at finding material in comics written "far grownups," as he puts it, Gaiman became intrigued with the medium once again. He met Moore in 1985, and got him to show him how a comic book script was laid out. Gaiman then wrote two comics stories, both unpublished, which he showed to Moore. The first, Gaiman says, was not very good, but the second, Moore told him, worked. For the next year and a half Gaiman did not do anything more in the medium, but then he became involved with a project called* Borderline, *with which the interview below begins.*

In addition to the projects mentioned in this interview, Gaiman has also written Don't Panic: The Official Companion to the Hitchhiker's Guide to The Galaxy, *which spent three months as number one on Locus's trade paperback best-seller list. He has edited a forthcoming book of what he terms "nasty poems for kids" by noted horror and science fiction authors called* Now We are Sick. *He has written a four-page story for* AARGH!, *Alan Moore's just-published comics anthology protesting anti-homosexual legislation in Britain.*

Gaiman is also putting together a special issue of the British magazine Time Out *to tie in with the World Fantasy Convention.*

AMAZING HEROES: *How did your collaborating with Dave McKean begin?*

NEIL GAIMAN: We were both working for an abortive British project called *Borderline*, and we were working on different strips, none of which came out. Paul Gravett from *Escape* had seen our stuff and asked if we'd be interested in working together on a five-page story for *Escape*, and we both sort of nodded violently. It's to Paul's credit that when we came back and said we've got this 48-page story called *Violent Cases* plotted, he said, yes, all right, we'll do it. Thank you, Paul, if you're reading this.

I'd written [*Violent Cases*] and Dave was halfway through drawing it when we heard that Karen [Berger] and Dick [Giordano] were going to be in town [London], meeting people who were established [in British comics]. I found where they were staying, rang Dick up, and said, "Can we come down there?" So Dave and I shunted down there, and 45 minutes later, Dick had said we could do *Black Orchid*. That only left me the problem of trying to come up with a story.

AH: *How did the theatrical version of* Violent Cases *come about?*

GAIMAN: I don't know an awful lot about it. You may remember over here there was a play version of *Halo Jones*. Well, the cast director of that, Eric Jarvis, got in touch with me and asked could he do *Violent Cases?* And my jaw slightly dropped, and I said, "As a play? How?" And he said, "As a one-man show. It'll be fine. Trust me." And I said, "Great, invite me to the opening night." So that's pretty much where it's at. From the occasional phone calls I get from him asking about clarification of textual details, they do know what they're doing, him and the actor. I'm as eager to see it as everyone else is. I get to go to the first night, and if it's really good, I get to say, "Yeah, I wrote that." If it's no good at all, I get to say, "Pity about that, but there's still the graphic novel." It opens at the end of October over here for two weeks, and then it's going to go on tour in the new year to coincide with the reissue of *Violent Cases*, which is going into a second edition, which will probably be printed in America. The impression I get from the publisher is that it's to keep the American price down. There'll probably be a new cover.

AH: *Have you started working on* Miracleman *yet?*

GAIMAN: I've written my first *Miracleman* story. It's for *Total Eclipse*. It's a little 10-page story called "Screaming," which is set in the *Miracleman* world. There was a short story that Alan [Moore] did in about 1982 called "One of Those Quiet Moments," which concerned Miracleman's meeting with a small boy called Jason Oakey in a wood. I've brought Jason back at the age of 15 in 1988. And as the story starts, he's just lost his virginity, and he's explaining to the person he's in bed with how this is the third important thing that happened to him. You get to find out what the first two important things were. I like it. It's a quiet, sweet little story about the total destruction of London, really. In the *Miracleman* that will probably have come out when this sees print, Kid Miracleman takes London apart personally. Jason was actually meant to be in London that weekend, but his mum sent him off to his aunt's instead at the seaside. You remember in *I Saw It* the kid who stepped behind the wall [thereby saving himself in the atomic destruction of Hiroshima]? In this case, being sent off to the seaside is like stepping behind the wall. Most of his friends get killed while he's being bored to death at the seaside.

AH: *How do you feel about getting to work in the super-hero genre?*

GAIMAN: Well, I'm still not really doing it in *Miracleman* because I don't believe *Miracleman's* a super-hero story. I think it was when it began, but Alan's moved it further away from that in Book Three.

Book Four, which is the one that I take over on, is going to be called "The Golden Age," which Dave McKean is going to be doing the covers on and Mark Buckingham is going to be drawing; Mark did the *Total Eclipse* story. [Book Four] is basically a collection of short stories set in this Miracleman-created utopia, in the present day, in 1988, as the story starts. It'll probably cover about 10 years. Some of them will be a few pages long; a few of them will fill entire comics. And you're going to know what it's like to live in utopia, or at least what Miracleman has created as utopia. And you'll get an idea of some of the problems inherent in it, some of the strangeness. Rather than trying to recreate the kick that I got from super-hero comics, it's like trying to recreate the kicks that I got as a very small kid from reading books of Greek legends back in the days when there were gods. It really is the Golden Age. It reflects the Golden Age of Comics. It's every Golden Age you've ever looked back on. But especially the very first Golden Age. It's an ideal time. There are gods, they're running the world, and they're creating a perfect world.

Then with Book Five, which is probably going to be called "The Silver Age," I think that's where a lot more super-hero motifs are going to come in. Because we're going to have an awful lot of young people growing up with tremendous powers and Miracleman-like abilities. The only real role models they have are going to be old comics. I have a feeling they're going to build a huge continent in the middle of the Pacific full of skyscrapers, with no people, that they can have big fights in.

You're going to be living in a world of miracles. Like in the Marvel and DC Universes the laws of probablity are twisted, so if you get bitten by a radioactive spider, you don't just die. The incredibly improbable happens to you instead. The incredibly improbable is going to start happening an awful lot in the *Miracleman* book. A number of classic but abandoned tropes [from super-hero comics] are going to be returning. I'm not sure if I can work in the Space Canine Patrol Agents [a team of super-powered dogs from *Superboy* in the 1960s], but I think everything else will be in there. And at least one dead character will be coming back.

And then Book Six, which is probably the last one that I'm going to do, is probably going to be called "The Dark Age." And that's going to be set a few hundred years in the future, and things will have changed a little bit by then.

Miracleman has gone beyond gritty realism by the time I get hold of it. It's gone back into mythology again. The treatment of the characters is going to be as realistic as I can make it.

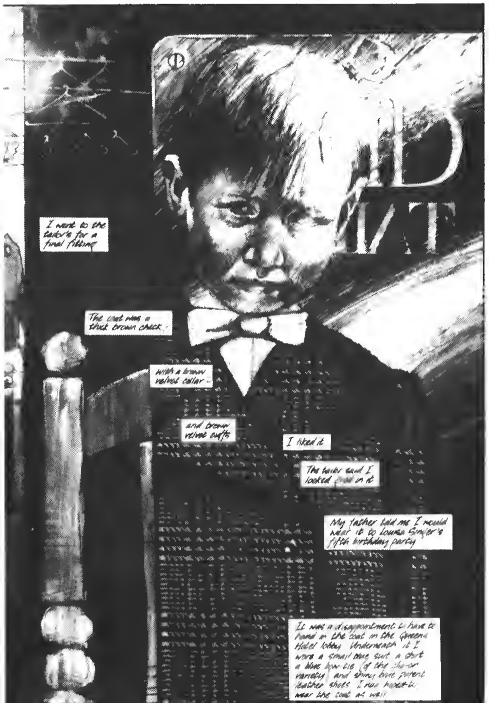
Books One through Three of *Miracleman* are really what would happen if there were super-heroes. There's an infinite number of answers to that, and Alan [Moore] took one very logical approach, which was that everything would be different.

The point that I get the book, it's going to be "What if the gods returned?" I'm going to be using super-hero metaphors. I think there may be interesting alien minerals in there, probably of different colors. I like the idea of one of these things being a recreational pharmaceutical. You take this and you're a giant ape for a week, or there's two of you, or you're a hermaphrodite. Maybe there's even a gold one: once you reach zen miracle state, you expose yourself to this and go back to being a normal human being. It's using the metaphors to try to say something else.

AH: *Do you prefer writing super-heroes as explicitly godlike beings in contrast with the more usual rule today of writing them as otherwise normal human beings who possess unusual powers?*

GAIMAN: I think both of them are very valid ways to do it. I think the thing that interests me about the first way is that nobody's really done that. And I don't really have a huge amount of interest in the latter approach. I don't think I could really do super-heroes. What I can do very well is I

From Gaiman and McKean's first collaboration, *Violent Cases*.



Gaiman will soon be replacing Alan Moore on *Miracleman*.

"Busking off all sorts of strange cultural detritus" From *Black Orchid*.

Readers will find some familiar faces in *Black Orchid*.

can do s.f., and I can do fantasy, and I can do horror, and I can do good short stories, and I can do weirdness. And so I'm playing to my strengths. There are people who can do super-heroes really well. Alan [Moore] is one, Grant Morrison is another. And I don't really think that I am. At least not yet.

So I can do something like the *Black Orchid* or *The Sandman*, which looks an awful lot like a super-hero comic. And in the case of *Black Orchid*, it's not, it's a strange sort of film noir thing, in which the Orchid represents an awful lot of things. And it's busking off some film noir territory, busking off some poetry, busking off all sorts of strange cultural detritus and so forth to try to create something new. [It's the same thing] with *The Sandman*, with *Miracleman*.

AH: *You've spoken of abandoned elements from past super-hero stories. Do you think it was a mistake to revise DC continuity so that things like Krypto and Red Kryptonite "never existed?"*

GAIMAN: I think that all this stuff has power. On one level I think that what was done to Superman makes a certain amount of sense. On another level I think it's rather silly, because you've got 50 years of history, and that can either be incredibly limiting and constraining, or it can give you a huge amount to play with. And I think the thing you can always do with super-heroes is ignore the bits you don't like, forget about them. I tend to think the approach of going in and saying this thing never existed is rather silly.

I prefer the approach that Alan [Moore] and Brian [Bolland] had in *The Killing Joke*, where you've got a Batcave full of bat-equipment from the late '30s through to now. And at one point he [the Batman] passes a photograph signed by Bob Kane with Batwoman and the old Bat-Girl and Bat-Mite and even Ace the Bat-Hound. It's an inclusive approach.

AH: *Similarly, The Killing Joke did not throw out the previous Joker origin story, in which he was the Red Hood, but expanded upon it.*

GAIMAN: Exactly. There are an awful lot of people out there who know this stuff. And if you take it all away from them, you've lost something.

AH: *If such elements of the continuity had an effect on the readers once, perhaps they have a value that should not be dismissed lightly.*

GAIMAN: When Alan [Moore] killed Krypto in his "last Superman story," I thought that was a touching moment. For anything to last awhile, it must have some power.

One thing I want to do at some point is play around with fairy stories, because they have a similar kind of content and quality to super-hero stories. All this stuff has power.

AH: *Your treatments of the Sandman and the Black Orchid both have connections to fairy tales.*

GAIMAN: Yes, I think they do. When I researched the Sandman I read the Hans Christian Andersen "Sandman" story for the first time, and there were things that shook me about that, which was how close his Sandman was, even down to some specific lines, to the preliminary jottings that I'd made about what I wanted to do with the character of the Sandman.

When you get into real basic mythic figures, you know when you're doing it right because it all clicks into place all the way down the line. The Sandman is an archetype. Black Orchid, I like to think, is an archetype. She's there in *The Golden Bough*. Since plotting *Black Orchid* I've discovered that there is a Welsh legend which is almost the same story as *Black Orchid* in terms of the eternal triangle set-up. And there's also a South American legend which has almost the same set-up in terms of the lead character, what she is, and her relationship to the other two lead characters. I think when you're dealing with archetypes you're going to get resonances, and these things are going to crop up all over the place.

AH: *What are you attempting to do with The Sandman?*

GAIMAN: With *The Sandman* I want to get in and explore some dark places, and I want to have a lot of fun, and there was also the challenge of "Could I write a monthly book?" With *The Sandman* I'm looking at dreams and nightmares. There's old gods. There's all the strange stuff, the creepy-bits, of the DC Universe. Again, areas with power. There's all the bits of the DC Universe I like. I had a ball doing Cain and Abel [the hosts of *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets*]. I started off doing them for laughs, and then gradually it shades over into doing them for horror, and then by the end I hope it's doing them for pathos: it's very moving, the relationship they're locked into. The three witches [the hosts of *The Witching Hour*], who are, whether intentionally or not, the classical triad: they're maiden, mother, and crone. As I do them they're the Eumenides, and they're also the Three Graces and the Morrigan—the Celtic triple goddess, and they're also the Fates and they're also the Norns. At one point the youngest of them, Cynthia, implies they may even be the Supremes, although I think she was just kidding. That was fun to do. The third issue is a John Constantine short story; I've always loved the character.

The way things seem to be running with *The Sandman* so far is that odd-numbered issues like one, three, five, will be pretty much from other people's viewpoints, and two and four and probably six will be from the Sandman's viewpoint.

AH: *As I understand it, the Sandman in your series will be the original Sandman of myth, an immortal being who has been held captive for 70 years, during which time DC's previous Sandmen led their careers. He regains his freedom and tries to regain control of the Dream Dimension he once ruled.*

GAIMAN: He's lost an awful lot of power. Part of it is just the fact that being kept prisoner for 70 years is a very debilitating experience. Part of it is the fact that the three things of power he had, things he had put a lot of himself into over the years, have been taken away from him: a pouch that is always full of dream-sand; his helmet, which is basically his badge of office, and a large red ruby, which he used to manipulate the fabric of the Dream Dimension. All these things were taken from him when he was captured. So what he's doing from the second issue through number seven is tracking these things down and trying to get them back.

AH: *Since your version of the Sandman is not a human being, does he have a non-human point of view?*

GAIMAN: He's not human by any stretch of the imagination. He does not have human moral standards. He does not have human perspectives on things. He's been around an awfully long time. He's not even a god, because gods die eventually... people stop believing in them. He's one of the Endless. Destiny—the guy with the book [a character in the DC Universe]—is one of them. Death is another. They're anthropomorphic personifications. He's not a person, he's almost an idea.

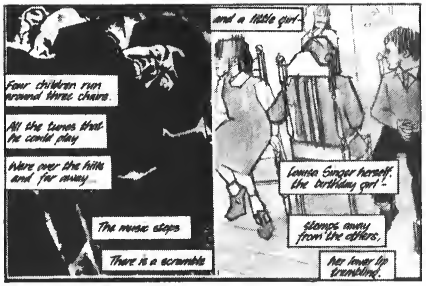
He definitely lacks things like mercy and compassion. He also lacks what we would consider perspective. I think he's going to be getting a little perspective as the series goes on. But to kick off with, his reaction to things is definitely not a heroic reaction. He would make as good a baddie as he would a hero for exactly the same set of motives.

The whole Dream World has fallen to bits. He used to have a huge castle in the Dream World and it's just a mass of rolling clouds right now. His initial purpose is just to make things what they were, and I think he's going to be finding to some extent that you can't go home again, and you can't go back.

The issue that I'm about to write is [set in] hell. One of the things that's in there is a game for me. A lot of the stuff I do that might seem like pointless intellectual exercises is partly to give me fun but partly because I think things have power. [In *Swamp Thing*] Alan Moore was playing around with the idea that demons spoke in different verse forms. The Demon spoke in strict iambic pentameter. So I'm going to be playing around in there. I've already written some triolets. If I can work in things like how to get in a strict ballad, I will. Possibly the occasional sonnet. I doubt that anyone will actually notice this, but it will be fun for me and should add very strange rhythms to the way it gets read.

AH: *As you write her, the Black Orchid is also an archetype, she's a nature goddess; she's a woman in search of her identity.*

GAIMAN: Yeah, she's a flower. I wouldn't call her a nature goddess the



"Kids don't filter things" From *Violent Cases*.

Black Orchid, "She's very much a child at the beginning."

way Swamp Thing's a nature god. The technical term that I used for her is a May Queen, with all the connotations that implies, including short life. They're two different branches of the thing. Swamp Thing is almost the male branch. Swamp Things live forever, the Orchids don't. The May Queens don't really have a tradition of living forever. They're things of beauty and they're things of innocence and purity. And they're also things of peace.

AH: *You present the Black Orchid as an innocent learning about the dark areas of the world. For example, she visits Arkham Asylum.*

GAIMAN: It's true. That's something I really want to bring out in that.

Arkham is a wonderful place, anyway. If the DC Universe is a giant rock, then Arkham is where you find all the nasty things squiggling underneath. That almost had to be in there for me.

AH: *The Black Orchid's gaining knowledge about the world could be a metaphor for a child's growing up.*

GAIMAN: Oh, definitely. She's very much a child at the beginning. And by the end of the story she is an adult with adult responsibilities and an adult viewpoint.

I think part of that [comes from] the way I tend to write. I don't tend to plot things in terms of conventional conflict. I tend to plot things in terms of place. I will take a character and move him or her from place to place and [deal with] his or her reactions to where he is and whom he's meeting. There's an overall plot in the background. But I feel more comfortable working [this way] because I feel this has marginally more resemblance to life.

AH: *Like* Orchid, Violent Cases *is, of course, also about a child learning about evil in the world.*

GAIMAN: It's almost a standing joke with a few of my friends that everything I write has kids in it, or is to some extent from a kid's viewpoint, or is about growing up. Which I think is true. And I think it's partly because kids, especially small children, have a vivid quality, an immediacy to their lives. Adults see things through a huge sort of filter of preconceptions, of notions about what the world is, of memory, of education. Kids don't. They don't have that filtering; things go straight in. I like that. It's something I often end up using or playing with.

AH: *What do you mean by the Black Orchid being part of an archetypal triangle?*

GAIMAN: The Orchid was, for want of a better word, created by a man named Phil Sylvain, who was a loser, really, but who was very good at what he did, and was a very, very nice guy. A long time ago he was in love with the woman she [the Orchid] was based on genetically. They grew up together.

The other member of the triangle is a man named Carl Thorne, who is the ex-husband of the woman whom the Orchid is genetically based on. The story begins on the day he gets out of prison, having done seven years. As the series progresses, he goes through a series of very unpleasant events, and he winds up very, very crazy.

It's a very peculiar form of eternal triangle going on among these three, which I thought was very much my own creation: you have the scientist, you have the flower woman, and you have the crazy warrior-type.

AH: *In the case of the Orchid, the scientist is also an artist, a creator of beauty.*

GAIMAN: He's also a wizard, to get down to basic archetypes. I was telling somebody the story, and he said, "That reminds me of the legend of a wizard who creates a woman out of flowers and falls in love with her."

AH: *Or Pygmalion and Galatea.*

GAIMAN: Things have overtones. Things have resonances. It's fun to plumb them.

AH: *How would you describe Dave McKean's art on* Black Orchid?

GAIMAN: The style Dave has chosen to do this in is this incredibly almost photo-realistic style with very strange edges. You really feel these are real people. Very few of them look like comic book characters.

Before Dave put pencil to paper, we talked through what we wanted to do with atmosphere in each book. The initial decision was that the first book would be very straightforward, would be—to use a hackneyed phrase—gritty realistic—would be very constrained. There wouldn't be any "oh, wow" panels. Book Two is the weird and disturbing one. Partly because in Book One everything takes place in cities and in rooms; we're inside a man-made world. In Book Two we're starting to explore the edges [like] Gotham City's Central Park, and the graveyard at the back of Arkham Asylum. It's still man-made but there are weird edges to it. By Book Three we knew it all had to be beautiful, because it's all in wild areas: the Amazon rain forest, the Louisiana swamps. Instead of having tiny splashes of color in a gray world, we have tiny gray people moving through this beautiful rain forest. I got a huge kick out of seeing the first of Dave's paintings [for Book Three], to see that we pulled it off. Most of the pages in there are just jaw-drop, sharp-intake-of-breath, "Gosh, don't they look wonderful!"

AH: *You've spoken about relating your work on these three series to past myths and legends. We've also spoken in the past about your allusions in* Black Orchid *to the works of other writers: Shakespeare, Lewis Carroll, even W. S. Gilbert. You appear to be very interested in relating your work to treatments of similar themes in art and literature outside the comics medium.*

GAIMAN: Well, that's what interests me.

I think comics is a wonderful field. I think it's incredible. I think you can do things in comics that you haven't got a hope of doing in other fields. The thing Dave and I always mention ... an example is changing the way the osteopath looks in *Violent Cases*, which you could not get away with in any other medium. If you did in film, you'd go, "Oh what a great make-up job," or, "They got a different actor." In comics it works.

I think the problem that too many comics creators get into is [all that] they know is comics and basic s.f. and fantasy, and so forth. And I think that's a terrible pity. I love most of the culture, that's definitely "culture" with a small "c." I love those bits that provoke resonances for me.

Poison Ivy comes out of the [Andrew] Wyeth "Helga" paintings, really. There's a painting he did of Helga were she's got a garland of flowers on, and it's on at a slightly peculiar angle. And she looks mad, because it immediately links her with every image of [Shakespeare's] Ophelia you've ever seen. So I wanted to play around with the imagery of madness. So we have a loop of flowers in her hair, and it makes her look mad. And it's tapping into that basic imagery, which I think is a nice thing to do.

AH: *Furthermore, by using these allusions, you not only enrich the meaning of the images in your own comics work, but you also appear to be making a statement that the comics medium is the equal of other media of artistic expression, and that therefore there can be an interchange of imagery.*

GAIMAN: Definitely. I really believe that. I've noticed bits of Alan's work in comics creeping back into [prose fiction] through the work of people like Clive Barker, which I think is wonderful.

AH: *And* Violent Cases *itself has become a play.*

GAIMAN: I think it's wonderful that [Alan Moore's "Shadowplay" from the forthcoming book] *Brought to Light* has become a play.

Writing the Hell issue of *Sandman*, the first thing I did was go out and buy a couple of Dante's *Inferno*. The main thing I got out of it is the size of Hell, how huge it is; it has tiny little cities. And this horrible feeling of inevitability.

Music, I find, plays back into what I write. *Orchid #3* is heavily influenced by Frank Sinatra songs.

AH: *What do you plan to do in comics in the future, besides continuing on* Sandman *and* Miracleman?

GAIMAN: The next thing I'm going to be doing for DC is what is referred to as the Magic Project. I'm not sure what it'll end up being called. It'll be a four-part Prestige Format, probably done by four different artists—Dave will be one of them—which is going to explore the nature of magic in the DC Universe.

I'm probably going to be doing a book with Bill [Sienkiewicz] at some point. Every time we get together we talk about it.

Then there's the second *Violent Cases* book. There should be four of them. [Each one takes the point of view of a child at a different age.] [In the first] *Violent Cases* [the child is] about four, then there'll be one at eight, one at 12, one at 16.

I do find it very peculiar that the first thing I've done in American comics is *Black Orchid*, this prestige thing. There is a level of nervousness inasmuch as neither Dave nor I have built up any kind of American following. We're doing what we think we ought to be doing, and we hope it works. ●

The Sandman is back, and boy is he pissed.

The Sandman, "Not human by any stretch of the imagination."

Dave McKean

...from page 20

we fancied doing a little five-page thing together for *Escape* magazine. It grew a bit and got out of hand, and became *Violent Cases* eventually. That's basically all I did over there was *Violent Cases*, and a few illustrations here and there. [*Actually, McKean has done a three-page* Mr. X *story, a fact which escaped both of our minds during the interview—AM*]

AH: Violent Cases *was a graphic novel that came out from Titan Books. It's being rereleased I understand, because of really spotty American distribution?*

McKEAN: Distribution is not the word, I don't think. It just didn't come over at all. I get the feeling that the retailers ordered five copies between them, and the distributors didn't bother soliciting. Now the people want to see what it is and they can't get it. What they're going to do, I think, is reprint it, and maybe even resize and redesign it, and coincide that with when *Black Orchid* comes out. It will be definitely well distributed next time.

AH: Violent Cases *was fully-painted, but in black-and-white, is that right?*

McKEAN: It was fully painted in warm and cold greys—wash, oil, pastel, and actually all kinds of stuff. But it was in black-and-white.

AH: *What medium do you normally work in?*

McKEAN: Oh God.

AH: *What are you doing* Black Orchid *in?*

Photo by Carol Kornick-Hernandez

McKean.

McKEAN: Yes, well, what I wanted to get across straightaway is that *Black Orchid* is not particularly my "style." Neither is *Violent Cases* particularly my "style." I'm using whatever is appropriate to the story. With *Black Orchid* it's a very linear, straight-ahead story, so the style in the storytelling and illustration is much more straight, much more reserved than *Violent Cases*, and even *Arkham Asylum*. *Black Orchid* is mostly watercolor and acrylics and washes, and I'm using car sprays a lot.

AH: *You're using what?*

McKEAN: Car sprays. Like you spray cars with. I never really got on with an airbrush. I hate the things. They jam, or ... anything I can't throw at the board, I lose interest in. So, car sprays I've used, and Byros [*ball-point pens*], and collage, and bits and pieces. I do use a lot of washes though, and ... anything. *Violent Cases* was a lot more collage and old photographs and ivy leaves and stuff.

AH: *And you just paste them directly onto the artwork?*

McKEAN: You paste them on, or get them photographed onto acetate so that other stuff shows through. That sort of thing.

AH: *You've been showing off the* Black Orchid *pages here at the San Diego Comic-Con, and most of them*

The cover to *Violent Cases*, "... collage and old photographs and ivy leaves and stuff."

McKean's rendition of Lex Luthor, from *Black Orchid*

seem to be non-traditional comic storytelling, even in the midst of "traditional comic storytelling" as you call it. How do you see them as being traditional?

McKEAN: Well, they're very traditional. How it came about is, I'm aware of the two schools of thought about comic storytelling. On the one hand you've got things like *Watchmen*, which is very, very pace-pace-pace storytelling, almost like a film—very linear. That involves you very immediately in the storytelling. There's no big images to catch your attention, which is a great way of doing it. The other way is like *Elektra*, which takes full advantage of the fact that it's a drawn image, and that you're using illustration, and really pulls that around and pushes that around. It's a lot more experimental, and can get over a lot more emotive stuff. I really don't see that there's a right way or a wrong way. They're just different ways. With *Violent Cases* we had a go at really playing around and doing some unusual bits and pieces. With *Black Orchid* being such a linear story, I decided basically to stick to a six-panel grid and veer out of that only occasionally. So, it's very traditional in that way.

AH: *You've never really done a super-hero type comic before. Do you see* Black Orchid *as being a super-hero comic, or are you approaching it in an entirely different manner?*

McKEAN: Well, I've never really particularly been a super-hero fan. I've liked comics over the years and while I was in art college, but it wasn't really the super-hero stuff that I was interested in. So when we went to DC and Neil (Gaiman) pitched the idea of doing *Black Orchid*, I get lumbered with doing 140 pages of purple women flying around . . . it's really like how I see these characters. I don't see them in context of all the other super-hero comics that have been. That's just my approach. I saw Black Orchid as a very lyrical, beautiful, purple, strange fantasy figure in the midst of what is basically a very, very realistic world with very real people and very real emotions—hopefully the dialogue is naturalistic. All this kind of stuff is happening, and then you have Black Orchid who is this totally ridiculous fantasy character wandering around in this black-and-white world. It seems like such a common sense thing really.

AH: *You're also utilizing different palets when you paint* Black Orchid? *In other words, the corporate scenes are in a starker color and . . .*

McKEAN: I see what you mean. Yes, that was another idea. That came about because I had to draw . . . Black Orchid is like the essence of nature, and she is incredibly beautiful in lovely purples and violets and pinks and that kind of stuff. I had to set her off against the rest of the world, so I thought initially to have her in bright purples and whatever, and the rest of the world in drab colors might work, but it wasn't enough. I couldn't draw her beautiful enough to get over that kind of impression. So I decided to take everything else back a step. Everything else in the world, the cities and the people and all the man-made stuff is in black-and-white. When she's in the corporate room, she's this little glowing figure of purple in amongst the black-and-white world. That's in the first book. In the second book, the story takes place in parks and cemetaries and other man-made "natural" elements, so it's greens and blues, but it's a little duller than the full-color stuff. It starts to bleed a little bit and spread out over the edges, so that by the third book we go to the Swamp Thing's swamplands. At the very end we're in a tropical rain forest, and it's all full-bleed bright greens, bright colors. The Black Orchid is playing with these butterflies and there is just every hue and every color that there is. The difference is that in #1 you get little purple figures in amongst the black-and-white world, and in the third book you get these little black-and-white corporate figures wandering around in this brilliant full-color world. This should set up a nice difference.

AH: *Getting onto your style a little bit, I'm sure you're tired of the comparison—or maybe not—but you're compared a lot to . . .*

McKEAN: To John Bryne, yeah (laughs).

AH: *Right. To John Byrne. No, actually, to Bill Sienkiewicz.*

McKEAN: Yep. I love Bill's stuff very much. I finally got to meet him a year ago and we've become good friends. He's a great chap. *Violent Cases* really was trying to get all the Bill Sienkiewiczisms out of my system once and for all. *Black Orchid* is hopefully moving away a little bit from that, but it's bound to be in there. I mean, you are the sum of all your parts, so he's going to still be in there. There's two main differences. One is that I'm looking a lot more at other stuff that Bill doesn't refer to. We both like the same people basically. We both like Bob Peake and Ralph Steadman and Gustav Klimt and impressionism. Since we both like the same people, inevitably we're going to have a little bit of similarities . . . probably too much on my part. I'm trying to get away from that. There's an American illustrator called Marshall Arisman that I like a lot, and many other artists that Bill doesn't refer to. The main difference—I was talking with J. Muth about this last night—is that Bill's American and I'm English, and we bring different sensibilities to our painting. Bill's very frenetic and cartoonish and full of extremes, very much how I perceive American culture. I come from a British point of view, which is a little more sedate and moody—moody on the positive side, and not that Bill isn't moody. But when you think of British horror or whatever, it's like churchyards and quaint little cobbled streets and all that kind of stuff. That's my background. I like such British illustrators as Russell Mills and Francis Bacon.

AH: *Okay. You also do all the covers for* Hellblazer. *What's the reaction been to that, and how did you land that job?*

McKEAN: I took along *Violent Cases* to show Karen Berger and Dick Giordano when they were in England, and Neil and I pitched them the idea of *Black Orchid* then. But to sort of keep me busy while Neil was working up *Black Orchid*, Karen wanted me to start working on the *Hellblazer* covers. Jamie (DeLano) was British, and John Ridgeway was English, so they wanted to keep it kind of an English package. So that's how I got stuck into those. They seem to be going down okay. I mean, people seem to like them.

AH: *Are they going to put out a portfolio with all of them, do you think?*

McKEAN: That was a possibility. When the *Shadow* portfolio came out I was nudging Richard Bruning and Karen (Berger) to do a portfolio. That's a possibility. I don't know about that sort of stuff. We'll see. I certainly would like to. I'd like to pull out the five or six that I like out of the twenty or so that I'm going to do.

AH: *Do you have any other cover assignments?*

McKEAN: Not yet. I'm trying to keep away from doing just odd bits and pieces. I really enjoy doing a series, so I feel that I've covered some ground with the *Hellblazer* covers. I've worked out a few things. The *Sandman* covers are going to be different. I want much more of a cohesive series of covers for those. I'm going to do a series of portraits, because each of the *Sandman* comics features a different character each month. I'm doing a series of portraits or half-shots or whatever in the middle. Down the edges, I'm going to do shelving. I've got some wood and made some shelves, and they'll be up the side. I'm stacking them with little bits and odd trinkets that have something to do with the story. The one that I'm really looking forward to doing is number four or five, which is a demon in hell story. I get to draw a painting of a demon in reds and oranges, then I'm going to build the shelves and stack them and just set fire to it. It'll be just burnt, charred shelving with burnt junk on it. We'll see what that's like.

AH: *You're really getting into your work! You're burning it! (Laughter)*

McKEAN: Right. (Laughter)

AH: *I've noticed you handing out pins and so forth for the* A.A.R.G.H. (Artists Against Rampant Government Homophobia) *book from Alan Moore's Mad Love Press. You've done something in that book?*

McKEAN: Yes. This is the first book to come out from Mad Love, Alan Moore's imprint. This book is basically why I got into illustration, to contribute to books like this . . . to books like this. I only have one hero, and he's the guy named Marshall Arisman who I mentioned earlier. He's an American illustrator who basically doesn't get involved in stuff that he doesn't feel is personally important. So, when Alan Moore gives me a call and says 'We're doing this *A.A.R.G.H.* book, which is about Clause 28'—which is this fascist anti-homosexual law going through England at the moment—I jumped at the chance. He asked me to do the cover, I said 'I'd love to. I'd pay you to do it.' (Laughter) So that's how I got involved. I painted the cover, which was very, very tough to do. I sat around for days, because it has to be perfect. It has to be absolutely right. You really have to pitch it right. I ended up doing twelve roughs for Debbie (DeLano) and Phyllis (Moore) to look through. I did that and went along and talked to them. I really wanted the book to be great. The contributions were all coming in and they were terrific, so I just wanted it to be packaged right, and to be designed and considered as a whole. I didn't want the book to be just a

One of McKean's ground-breaking *Hellblazer* covers...

bunch of sketches thrown together, so I ended up designing the book as well.

AH: *Is the Man on your cover anybody important?*

McKEAN: No. It was just supposed to be an authority figure. Basically, the Conservative Party in England has such a huge majority that they work up these terrible laws, these God-awful laws. They sit there in the House Of Lords and the House Of Commons and they say "Okay, we'll talk about this and listen to the other side of the argument," but there's such a huge majority that these laws just go through come what may. We don't stand a hope in hell of arguing this case. I just wanted this authority figure with some kind of obsessive little action of cutting up the newspapers into these paper dolls: man, woman, man, woman, man, woman.

AH: *The newspaper means something too, doesn't it?*

McKEAN: Yes, that's the other thing. The book is about homophobia, and the bulk of that comes from the tabloid press, which I don't know if you have a similar thing in America. In England you have the *Sun* and the *News of the World*, which are these gutter-press staunch right-wingers that just print lies. Basically they just print lies, and they present a way of life which is quite apalling, and one I really want to have nothing to do with. Unfortunately, this way of thinking is swamping England at the moment.

AH: *So the fact that he's cutting up these papers is symbolic?*

McKEAN: Yes. Buy this book. If you must buy anything this year, you've got to buy *A.A.R.G.H.*

AH: *And with people like Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons, Frank Miller, and Dave McKean, you'd be a fool to pass it up. (Laughter) Now you're also doing* Arkham Asylum, *which will be a graphic novel coming from DC about when?*

McKEAN: It should be around Aprilish.

AH: *Who's writing that?*

McKEAN: That's being written by a Scottish writer named Grant Morrison, who really has a totally... he's like Two-Face. You know, the character from *Batman?* A total split. Half of him is this comics fan who loves the old super-hero characters of the sixties, and he's getting all of that out of his system with *Animal Man* for DC and *Zenith* for *2000 AD* in England. The other half of him is this crazed Scottish Dennis Potter character who writes this strange stuff. Very, very intense and very lyrical. That's the side of him that's doing *Arkham Asylum*. It's come out a very disturbing and interesting book. I hope to do it justice.

AH: *That will be what format?*

McKEAN: It's probably going to be about a hundred pages, full-color hardback, clothbound, this, that, and the other.

AH: *What's the story concerning?*

McKEAN: Um, right. Well, neither of us are telling. Neither of us are really saying anything about it. It's not... I'll tell you what it's not. It's not a realistic portrayal of Batman. Grant's saying it's a mythic, religious portrayal of Batman, and I'm saying it's like a black *Alice In Wonderland*. That's about it. It's all set in the Asylum, and it's a very strange story.

AH: *What characters are mainly being used?*

McKEAN: All the good old standbys are there. Batman's there, the Joker, Two-Face...

AH: *Killer Croc's on your promotional poster.*

McKEAN: Killer Croc's in there, but all of them will look not an awful lot like the usual characters you know and love. Certainly not Killer Croc. I'm not going to draw a guy in a suit, with a crocodile head. I can't understand that at all. He's going to look very strange.

AH: *What do you see for the future past* Arkham Asylum*?*

McKEAN: I'm really enjoying working for DC. They've been very kind and very nice. I really love working with Karen Berger, so I'd like to carry on working for DC. But I'm not a great super-hero fan. I really don't enjoy that at all. The only two things I have to say about super-heroes—which are minimal to begin with—I will have done with *Black Orchid* and *Batman*, the *Arkham Asylum* book. After that, I really just want to get on to more interesting subject matter.

AH: *Such as?*

McKEAN: Straight after *Arkham Asylum* I want to do another *Violent Cases*-style book. Very, very small and intimate. Just a small, black-and-white or maybe two-color story. Again, very personal.

AH: *Aren't there supposed to be five* Violent Cases*?*

McKEAN: Four. There was going to be four of those, and we'd like to do the second one after *Arkham Asylum*. After that, what I'm basically going to do is treat this like the film industry, where I work up a story or a script, and samples and a few sketches and ideas and the approach and designs, and package it all together and mail it off to whoever... Anybody. Whoever bites, bites. I'll do it that way. I'm not going to do characters so much, although I was talking with Jamie DeLano about doing John Constantine, because he's such a lovely character. I really want to stay away from that and just do stories. Interesting stories. Something with a bit of content. Something with some kind of social and political context, as well as just being entertaining. ●

...and yet another cover. This one for Alan Moore's *AARGH!*

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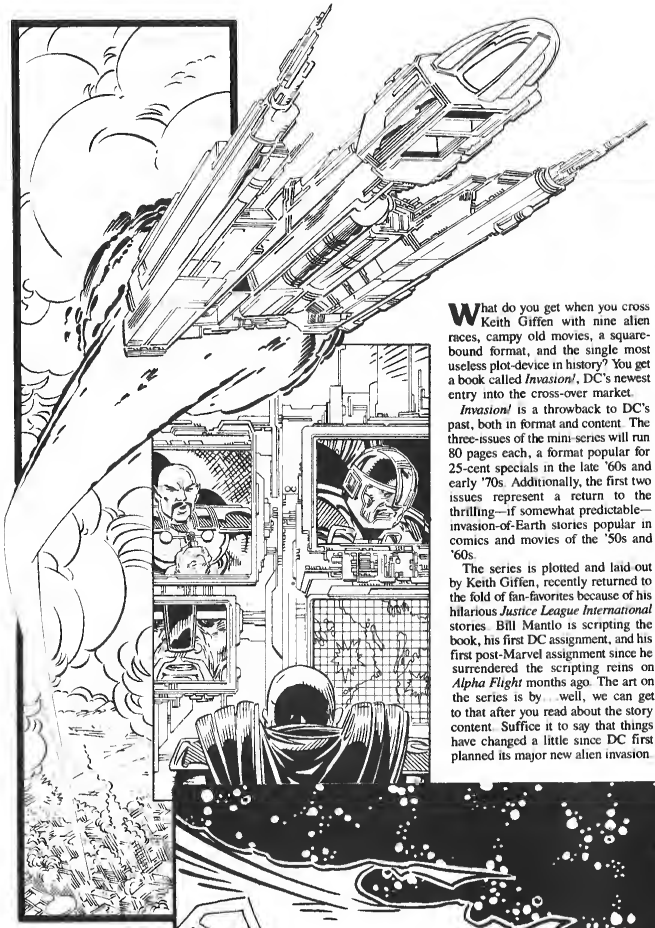
Invasion of the Para-Gene Snatchers

An *INVASION!* Preview

by Andy Mangels



What do you get when you cross Keith Giffen with nine alien races, campy old movies, a square-bound format, and the single most useless plot-device in history? You get a book called *Invasion!*, DC's newest entry into the cross-over market.

Invasion! is a throwback to DC's past, both in format and content. The three-issues of the mini-series will run 80 pages each, a format popular for 25-cent specials in the late '60s and early '70s. Additionally, the first two issues represent a return to the thrilling—if somewhat predictable—invasion-of-Earth stories popular in comics and movies of the '50s and '60s.

The series is plotted and laid out by Keith Giffen, recently returned to the fold of fan-favorites because of his hilarious *Justice League International* stories. Bill Mantlo is scripting the book, his first DC assignment, and his first post-Marvel assignment since he surrendered the scripting reins on *Alpha Flight* months ago. The art on the series is by... well, we can get to that after you read about the story content. Suffice it to say that things have changed a little since DC first planned its major new alien invasion.

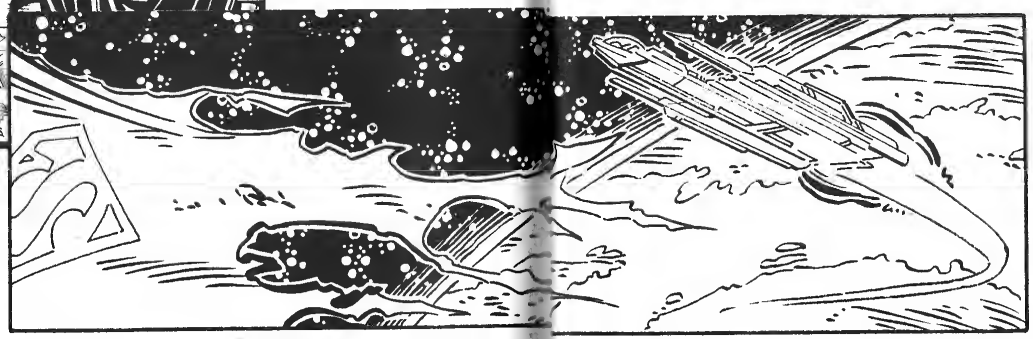
Plan Nine from Outer Space (1959)

The first issue of *Invasion!*, which ships October 1, is entitled "The Alien Alliance." Nine of the alien races in the DC Universe band together under the leadership of The Dominators. While some of the alien races have been seen in the present-day continuity, some may initially only be familiar to readers of the *Legion of Super-Heroes*. "We're sort of extrapolating backwards," says editor Andy Helfer. "We've seen the Khunds, the Durlans, the Dominators, and various other races in the 30th Century, but we're looking at what their races would be like in the 20th Century."

The Dominators have been observing Earth, and the super-heroes in particular. "Especially during the *Millennium*," says Helfer, "they've realized that Earth, in addition to being the place where the next step in evolution is taking place, is also an environment that is highly conducive to all kinds of strange paranormal development."

This realization is part of what leads the Dominators to gather the nine alien races together to invade Earth. The nine races include: the Dominators, the Khunds (future *Legion* foes), the Okaarans (Starfire's warlord trainers), the Durlans (Legionnaire Chameleon Boy's race), the Thanagarians (Hawkman's people), the Citadel (*Teen Titans* and *Omega Men* foes), the Gil' Dishpan (future *Legion* foes), the Psions (*Omega Men* foes), and the Daxamites (Legionnaire Mon-El's race).

The first 20-page chapter of issue #1 deals with the motivations behind the Dominator's actions. "Why are they going after Earth in the first place?" asks plotter Keith Giffen. "What is it that provokes them into going after Earth and forming this alliance with many races which ordinarily might be their enemies?"



The nine invading alien races. Left to right: Dominators, Durlans, Thanagarians, Gil'Dishpans, Daxamites, Okaarans, The Citadel, Psions, and Khunds

The motivations for the invasion seemingly lie in the fear of Earth's paranormals. On Durla, for instance, because the entire race of the planet is shape-shifters, other races can produce technological defenses to stop the Durlans from infiltrating their planet. Similar defenses can be raised against any racially inherent paranormal ability, whether it be the Imskian's shrinking ability or the Gemworld's magical abilities. "What's different about Earth," says Giffen, "is that any paranormal abilities that come about—there's no category they can fit into. One person can fly, one has super-speed, one's invulnerable, one can shoot fire. No one can predict or prepare defenses against Earth's paranormals. If this keeps going, and Earth is the next 'super-race,' there's no way any of these other races can defend themselves should Earth decide to attack them. There are just too many paranormal abilities. So this conclave of alien races is scared."

Andy Helfer stresses that the Dominion is not outwardly invading Earth to conquer the planet. "They don't particularly want to destroy Earth. After all, the vast majority of Earthlings don't have powers. These guys are not like the Huns, going around killing everything in sight. We don't know whether this is paranoia on their part or a real fear but it certainly isn't a fear directed towards the Earth, but rather towards an element of Earth. They don't know what this element is yet, but they do know that Earth has more paradoxically-generated super-powered beings."

The second chapter of the first issue details the Dominions' rounding up of non-cooperative or pro-Earth super-characters in the Universe. "While some planets, such as Adam Strange's Rann and various Green Lantern's planets will not join the Dominion, neither will they lift a finger to help Earth," says Giffen. "But there are some elements which could cause problems for the Dominion, so they are rounded up. This includes all of the outer-space science-fiction oriented DC heroes who have been shown to have a loyalty or sympathy towards Earth, as well as any super-powered being who has a sympathy towards the original mandate of the Guardians of the Universe. Thus, a lot of ex-Green Lanterns, the Omega Men, Adam Strange, and several others are rounded up and placed in a kind of outer-space stalag—a prison camp."

Chapter Three delves into the aliens' preparation for the invasion. "This is the nuts-and-bolts of getting ready," says Giffen. "Everything is getting set—the ships, the fleets—where they are going to strike first, how they are going to attack, and so forth."

The fourth and final chapter of issue #1 finds the Dominion taking control of Australia and delivering their demands to a startled Earth populace: "Hand over the heroes and we won't destroy your world."

Mars Invades Puerto Rico (1965)

As with most large cross-over series, *Invasion!* has a number of cross-overs. Unlike most large cross-overs, *Invasion!*'s cross-overs will not be integral to the main framework storyline. Cross-over stories between each issue of *Invasion!* will be recapped in the following issue of *Invasion!*, which means that casual readers will not be required to buy a whole bunch of cross-overs. Andy Helfer stresses this point, adding that if you *do* read the cross-overs you will get a fuller story, but that they are not necessary.

Several cross-overs will appear after *Invasion!* #1, all of which lead into the second issue. (The events in these cross-overs continue the invasion of the Earth, as the Dominion establishes a total of five beachheads across the world.) Unlike *Legends* or *Millennium*, there are not usually any particular order the cross-overs must be read, except that they should be read after the issues of *Invasion!* that come out in the same months. Here's a guide to the *Invasion* #1 (cover-captioned as "Invasion! First Strike Extra") cross-overs:

The *Checkmate* team splits up across the globe in their 11th issue, with a few of their members trying to stop the aliens from assassinating the Queen of England! But can the knights of Checkmate be effective in the worldwide war when they are spread so thin? Then, in *Firestorm* #80, Firestorm teams with Firehawk, Power Girl and Starman to fight the aliens who have taken over the South Pacific. This story concludes in *Starman* #5, where the Khunds just might prove to be a bigger menace than the four heroes can handle.

In *Wonder Woman* #25 Black Canary teams with the Amazing Amazon to defend Paradise Island from the attacking aliens who have found a way to cross the dimensional gate to the Amazons' home. This issue also debuts new penciller Chris Marrinan and inker Will Blyberg. Meanwhile, Superman finds himself defeated—not by the aliens, but by Baron Sunday—leaving Gangbuster alone to try to keep Metropolis free of aliens. This all happens in *Superman* #26, and is continued in *Adventures of Superman* #449, wherein the aliens, Gangbuster, and the Guardian are all searching for the missing Man of Steel!

In *Animal Man* #6, Buddy Baker takes on a Thanagarian hawk-warrior who's planted an atomic bomb in the San Andreas Fault, while Hawkman and Hawkwoman are too busy to help Oberon in *Justice League International* #22. When a squadron of minaturized aliens teleport into the J.L.I. embassy, the only one who's not out saving the world is Oberon, and now he has to join the battle!

Manhunter is hired to keep the Flash out of trouble in *Manhunter* #8, which means he has to track Flash and the Chunk down in Cuba in *Flash* #21! The Scarlet Speedster isn't the only one concerned with Cuba, in *Detective* #595, Batman must stop a shipment of Thanagarian weapons coming from that very island.

The first new Doom Patrol member dies in *Doom Patrol* #17, as the weird heroes fight the Gil' Dishpan in the Arctic Circle. This issue guest-stars Aquaman, Aqualad, the Sea Devils, and the entire Atlantean army! Then, in *Swamp Thing* #81, the leafy hero disappears from the swamp, leaving a terrified (and pregnant) Abby all alone. And in *Power of the Atom* #7, Ray Palmer goes undercover in the alien armada to help the war efforts.

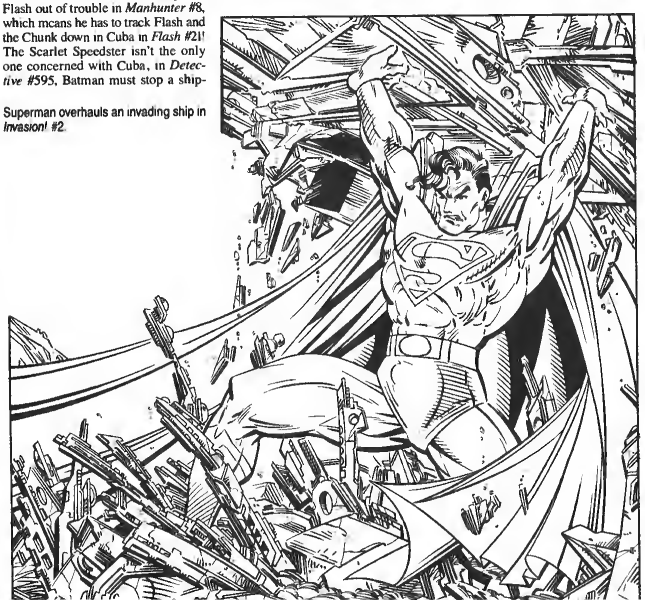
The New Guardians become the second team to lose a member as they defend China from the aliens (in *New Guardians* #6). But did this teammate die heroically, or was it a grand suicide gesture to save himself (or herself) from the ravaging approach of the AIDS virus? Mystical guest-stars galore appear in *Spectre* #23, when the ghostly guardian gathers DC's real mystery men (and women) for a mystic summit. But with a meeting like this, who's surprised when all hell breaks loose?

It Conquered The World (1956)

Invasion! #2 is entitled "Battleground Earth," although it could technically be called World War III. "This is actual war," says Giffen. "We actually come into the war in midstream. We're using a set of newsclips at the beginning to catch the readers up on what's been going on. Much of Earth has fallen, and we show the whole big canvas. You can look across this big canvas, or if you want to find out in detail what's happened, you can pick up any of the books which bear the *Invasion!* cross-over imprint. In other words, we'll cover what Firestorm did in his story, but if you want more details, you can pick up *Firestorm*. The cross-overs start the war for us, but they really serve as appendixes."

Once we get done with the newsreels and what's been happening in the world, we get onto the war itself—the Earth's strategy, the Dominion's strategy, the different battle-fronts." The main battle-fronts will be the South Pacific, the Chinese/Russian border, the Arctic icecap, Earth orbit, and Cuba.

"Part of the Dominion's strategy is the systematic attempt to extricate the super-heroes from the planet Earth," says Helfer, "or destroy them. The aliens begin to overtake or capture the heroes, either killing them on the spot, or putting them in internment camps. The aliens on Earth are their first targets—Martian Manhunter, Kilo-



Superman overhauls an invading ship in *Invasion!* #2.

Firestorm and Green Lantern do their part for the war effort

wog, Arisia, and some of the other "alien" sympathizers. The New Guardians are quickly overtaken, as The Dominion perceives them as the start of a new Master Race on Earth."

Giffen plans to tell the story in a series of small, inter-cut scenes, using the main command center/war room as the connecting device. "At the War Room, Captain Atom is basically playing General Eisenhower for all of Earth's paranormals. With him, to help coordinate efforts in the worldwide defense, is General Eiling, Maxwell Lord, Oberon, and Amanda Waller. The U.N. has put much of the international security control in their hands. They can basically call the shots. Eiling handles the military; Amanda handles much more of the intelligence and 'spook' areas; Captain Atom manages the super-heroes; and Maxwell Lord and Oberon utilize their diplomatic ties and coordinate the use of Justice League embassies as way-stations and safe-houses. Other than these characters, we're not going to focus much on any one group at any time. We hope to get the idea across that this is a major, global conflict going on."

"By the end of the second issue," adds Giffen, "the war ends. The war itself, the actual hostilities and battles are over. There are a lot of twists and turns and double-crosses. You might think 'Well, geez, in one issue you build this big war up and then turn around and end it.' But believe me, it makes sense. There is something that happens—in the book—that just turns everything around. It's not a throwaway ending. It's not just Dr. Fate stepping in and snapping his fingers and everything's okay. We got rid of the mystical heroes by having the Spectre take them out of this plane of existence, so we don't have any mystical heroes floating around there that can get in the way. Let's face it, the Spectre could come and just blow the fleet away. We had to do something about the mystical heroes."

"But the war does end. To all intents and purposes, the actual story of the war is *Invasion!* #1 and #2."

Santa Claus Conquers The Martians (1964)

Cross-overs for *Invasion!* #2 will pick up the final threads of the war, as well as dealing with the aftermath of the struggle and setting up *Invasion!* #3. All of these cross-overs will be labeled with an "Invasion! Aftermath-Extra" designation.

Shipping the week prior to *Invasion!* #2 will be a 16-page tabloid "newspaper," the *Daily Planet's Invasion! Edition*. This bagged newspaper will feature a full-color map charting the alien invasion, with feature stories describing the conflict. It will also include TV listings, sports pages, columns by Clark Kent, Lois Lane, and some guy named Kevin Dooley, horoscopes, an advice column, and a full page of comic strips!

Invasion! #2 ships on November 8, a week after which Checkmate combats a final alien assault on Cape Canaveral in their 12th issue. Firestorm travels to Moscow in *Firestorm* #81, searching for Mikhail's family, to find whether or not they survived the invasion, and ends up face-to-face with Soyuz instead.

Cleaning up Cuba in *Flash* #22, Wally West finds himself the unwilling guest of honor at a 21st birthday party thrown for him by none other than Fidel Castro! This story leads into *Manhunter* #9, wherein the Scarlet Speedster and Manhunter must find the kidnapped Castro before another international incident is started. But Wally better enjoy his super-speed while he can.

In *Wonder Woman* #26, Diana joins with the *Justice League International* to help rebuild the devastated Earth, while other J.L.I. members find themselves on an island populated entirely by super-villains in their 23rd issue!

Superman wrestles with his own alien nature as well as the invaders in *Superman* #27, while the Guardian must stop an out-of-control Gangbuster at a terrible cost. Then, in *Adventures of Superman* #450, Gangbuster's true identity is revealed, while a guilt-ridden Superman leaves Earth . . . forever!

Finally, the Atom finds himself battling Chronos on the beaches of San Clemente in *Power of the Atom* #8, just before guest-starring with Blue Beetle, Green Lantern, and Power Girl, as they help Starman fight the Power Elite (in *Starman* #6).

A Farewell to Arms (1957)

At the conclusion to *Invasion!* #2, one of the rogue Dominator scientists has finally discovered the existence of a gene, the discovery of which will have a lasting and dramatic effect on the DC Universe, changing many of the things we know about different super-hero origins. "This alien believes in the existence of some kind of a genetic trait that causes these upredictable paranormal surges among humans," says Giffen. "The paranormal genes are not consistent among the human race, nor even consistent in the powers they trigger."

"The para-gene is almost like an extra chromosome," says Helfer. "Until the person becomes a practicing paranormal, this gene lies dormant. The theory here is that something happens to each individual that activates this gene, which then brings the powers out. The powers are almost always a reaction to an adverse situation, whether it's chemicals falling on your head, or nuclear radiation, or whatever."

Things get really nasty when the Dominator scientist discovers a way to isolate and shut down this gene. "All of the sudden, the gene starts sending out wrong signals," says Giffen. "This shuts the host body down—in effect, self-destructing."

For that reason, issue #3 is entitled "World Without Heroes." It is the aftermath of the war, and the world is already in chaos. While the governments struggle to regain individual control after centralizing everything during the war, the heroes are struggling with the gene-bomb, and the strange way it has affected many of them.

"What the gene-bomb does," says Giffen, "is shut down the para-gene which then makes the hero's body and system unable to deal with the added stress of a paranormal ability. It removes the body's ability to adapt to whatever paranormal ability the host body has assumed. In other words, the Flash does not lose his super-speed, but his body can no longer adapt. His power is killing him, because his metabolism is racing too fast every time he uses his powers. The Green Flame is burning up. She's going to internally combust pretty soon. Dr. Fate will even be affected when he gets back to this plane of existence. The New Guardians are radically affected."

"Certain heroes are not affected by the gene-bomb as radically as others—at least at first. There are those who are smart enough to not use their powers, or who may not have any paranormal abilities yet—just the gene. Unfortunately for them, the second effect of the gene-bomb shuts down their para-gene, which in turn begins to shut the host body down. They're sort of like machines, slowly winding down. In effect, their powers are killing them. It's a slow, wasting disease."

Interestingly enough, the effects of the gene-bomb are felt on some of the traditionally non-powered heroes as well. For instance, Blue Beetle may be one of those who will be affected, whereas Batman will not. Then there are the odd cases of heroes not affected by the gene including Superman, Orion, Swamp Thing, Starfire, and Starman. Why not? And how are they going to help their fellow global guardians?

"The story becomes almost a super-hero version of *The Andromeda Strain*," says Giffen, "with the disease and the hunt for a cure. Eventually it becomes a a mission into space, because now it's the heroes taking the war to The Dominion. It's almost a reverse-invasion, as those who can, go to the Dominion world hoping to find a cure."

"I bet you wonder how this ends?" laughs Giffen. "Will they find a cure or not? It's like going to a *Rocky* film and not being able to figure out how it ends."

Coming Apart (1969)

Giffen is not denigrating his work on *Invasion!* by comparing it to a *Rocky* film, but instead making a point about the simplicity of the story. "When I reel out the story of *Invasion!*," says Giffen, "it's almost moronically simplistic. The aliens attack, we fight back, we win, they try one more thing, we get sick, we get well, happy days are here again. We went into *Invasion!* wanting to do a 1950s style here-come-the-aliens-invasion-movie. This is not supposed to be fraught with hidden meaning. We're just hoping it will be a nice, rollicking, good-time-is-had-by-all adventure story. I'd like people to sit down and read it and say, 'That was a kick.' If anyone is looking for deep meanings or angst or anything more than what's on the paper, they're going to be bitterly disappointed."

"It's like trying to read deep meaning into *The Blob* or *Invasion of the Saucer Men*. Even our poster is a take-off on those old science-fiction movie posters. This is a cross between *Red Storm Rising* (a scenario for World War III) and the *Mars Attacks* cards. We really have no more substance than the *Mars Attacks* cards, but it's fun. All the cross-over series so far have tried to lay on these big thematic overtones and a really heavy message attached to the story. *Invasion!* is not like that at all. This is three 80-page issues of what we hope is just fun. And there's nothing wrong with having fun at all."

Giffen adds that by "fun," he does not mean the *Justice League International* slapstick humor, but more of the rousing adventure type of fun such as that in the old Gardner Fox *Justice League* stories and the early *Fantastic Fours*. "It's not mindless fun, but it is something you can sit down and read and enjoy, and that's all that's expected of you. We don't want anything else from you."

But what about the para-gene revelation and the effects on the DC Universe once the bomb is dropped? "What the gene-bomb means for writers," says Giffen, "is that they can now fine-tune their characters. They

When you have as much as a Dominator, tooth-wise, it's not wise to annoy a Khund.

can cure the character and not give them specific powers back, or they can continue having the hero shutting down from the process."

"The real long-term effect of *Invasion!* is two-fold," says Helfer. "One, it alters the perception of how the heroes got to be that way. It's no longer the common freak accident that did it. It's the freak accident that they survived that makes the gene begin to work. Second, it opens up a whole new world of potential new heroes, and ways to begin their stories. It offers an explanation that on one hand sets up a fraternity—a similarity between all the heroes, but on the other hand it does not say that you can't become one. You could have the gene. You don't know until it happens."

"The para-gene has been called," says Giffen, "the single most powerful plot device in the DC Universe. I call it the singlemost useless plot device in the DC Universe. If you want to ignore it, fine, just tell a regular origin. If you want to use it, it's there. A writer can play around with certain people trying to activate the para-gene, which will react to the correct stimulus. A new paranormal might result, the person might be killed, or a negative effect—like the Hulk—could result. It can be played with in any way the writer wants to, or it can be totally ignored."

"The para-gene is what could be a new *raison d'etre* for the DC Universe, says Helfer. "We certainly define what makes a hero in a way that's never been defined before. The ramifications of *Invasion!* will pretty much come from the para-gene revelation in issue #3."

Helfer adds that many of the books, including *Captain Atom*, *Flash*, *Spectre*, and *Justice League International*, will continue the themes of *Invasion!* after the series is over, especially considering some of the major changes wreaked by the gene bomb. Two Doom Patrollers, one New Guardian, several Omega Men, and a few other heroes have not survived the conflicts at the end of *Invasion!*, and oddly enough, the para-gene bomb actually brings a few heroes back from the "dead!"

A six-part mini-series-within-a-series will spin out of *Invasion!*, beginning in *Spectre* #24, with art by Bill Willingham. A man who has the para-gene barely survives the sickness that has resulted because of the gene bomb, but now a mysterious organization has kidnapped him and is attempting to trigger his possibly dormant super-powers. Jim Corrigan and associates must find the man before he can be empowered or killed, except one thing bars their way; the Spectre wants the man dead as well!

Another hero, Captain Atom, finds himself the focus of too much attention as a result of his efforts in the war, and combined with his para-gene sickness, becomes completely stressed out and vanishes from sight in *Captain Atom* #25 and following issues. *The Flash* meanwhile finds himself completely powerless as of his 23rd issue, with no hope of getting his super-speed powers back again, while Maxwell Lord and the New Guardians all find themselves radically affected by the gene-bomb as well.

Two (and a half) new series will debut early next year as result of *Invasion!*; *L.E.G.I.O.N. '89* and *Justice League Europe* will get regular series, while *Blasters* is a new group that will appear in several DC series before possibly receiving their own comic.

L.E.G.I.O.N. '89 will appear in January 1989, plotted by Keith Giffen, dialogued by Alan Grant, pencilled by Barry Kitson, and inked by Mike DeCarlo. "The group is going to be one that grows and expands," says assistant editor Art Young, "and it's eventually going to be an intergalactic police force, possibly as big as the Green Lantern Corps. Keith is approaching them as if they are kind of above the law. They are their own law, vigilantes in a way."

Only a few characters for *L.E.G.I.O.N. '89* have been set so far: Vril Dox (the son of Brainiac and great-grandfather to Brainiac 5), Strata (ancestor to Blok), an ancestor of Shadow Lass's, and possibly a few Omega Men characters. "Vril Dox is kind of a manipulative bastard," says Young. "The reason the new Legion members stay around is that he kind of manipulates them for the first couple of issues. Then they stay around to keep him in check, because they realize that he's a madman, and if they don't keep him in check he may go off the deep end. It's not a happy group, it's a group kept together by necessity." As the group grows in size and age, so too will the title; each year the title will gain a year, i.e., *L.E.G.I.O.N. '90*, *'91* etc.

Justice League Europe will come about because several heroes have met each other for the first time during the invasion, and decide to become a branch of the Justice League International. Their story is picked up in *Justice League International* #24 and #25, and then is continued the following month in their own regular series. As with *J.L.I.*, Keith Giffen is plotting and laying out, and J.M. DeMatteis is dialoguing. Newcomer Bart Sears (about which more later) will pencil the series which stars Wonder Woman, Animal Man, Captain Atom, Green Lantern, and possibly Hawk & Dove. At press time, Joe Rubinstein was the potential inker for the series.

Blasters is a team of individuals who were exposed to stimuli by the Dominator scientists in attempts to trigger their para-gene. Out of fifty experimental subjects, six men survive long enough to eventually escape and return to Earth bearing new super-powers. The group was created by Bob Fleming and James Fry, but until (and if) *Blasters* receives its own series, the characters will probably just guest-star in other DC books.

The Omega Men, including Tigorr, are early targets of the invaders.

Three on a Couch (1966)

Okay, so until now we haven't made any mention of who will be drawing *Invasion!*, and there's a very good reason for that. First, quite a slew of inkers are going to do the book. Second, the penciller dropped out halfway through issue #2. Third, more complications arose finding *two* new pencillers and working around the inkers' schedules. As it stands now, here is the artistic line-up of *Invasion!*, straight from Andy Helfer's mouth:

Issue #1 is pencilled by fan-favorite Todd McFarlane, current artist on *Amazing Spider-Man*, ex-artist on *Incredible Hulk*, *G.I. Joe*, *Detective* and *Infinity Inc.*. The first twenty pages are inked by P. Craig Russell, while the second twenty pages are inked by Al Gordon. Joe Rubinstein inks the third section, before turning the last section over to Todd McFarlane to ink himself.

Issue #2 begins with pencils by McFarlane and inks by P. Craig Russell and the second section is again by McFarlane and Gordon. At this point, McFarlane steps out of the pencilling shoes, and Keith Giffen steps in to pencil the last half of the book. Joe Rubinstein inks the third section, while either Al Gordon or Dick Giordano will ink the final section.

Invasion! #3 is pencilled by newcomer Bart Sears, and will only contain three chapters (although the book is still 80 pages). The book's inking order is undetermined, but four inkers are set to work on it: Joe Rubinstein, Pablo Marcos, Al Gordon, and Dick Giordano.

Fans may remember that Todd McFarlane was slated to do the full series, but due to several circumstances, had to pull out midway during the second book. "Todd overcommitted himself on various projects," says Helfer, "and he was running so far behind schedule that we had to replace him. However, because we think that the third issue is the strongest of the three, and in fact, really stands apart from the other two, it works well to have another artist on it."

"We really think Bart Sears is a great artist," adds Helfer. "He's going to really go somewhere. I wasn't happy about Todd leaving, but I think that Bart is a great replacement. Stylistically, they're not worlds apart, so that helps as well. It's a great way for Bart to cut his teeth on the DC Universe, and to introduce him to a lot of readers. He's done two issues of *Cops* and an issue of *Spectre* for us, and he is doing the new *Justice League Europe* book."

Unknown to most fans will be the involvement Keith Giffen has had in all of the artwork. Besides pencilling the second half of issue #2 (nobody else knew the story well enough to do it justice), Keith's artistic influence will be felt as strongly as it is in *Justice League International*. "I broke down the pages for Todd (as I do with Kevin Maguire), and tried to slant it towards his storytelling. I got together with him beforehand and asked what he liked to draw on the pages, how many panels he likes to work with, how he likes them layed out, etc. So far, so good. I don't have any artistic complaints about any of the people on the book so far. On a project as complicated as this, that's great! With a potential to go so bad or so wrong on a project this big, the stuff that's come out so far is great!"

"Bart Sears is new and he's wonderful," adds Giffen. "He's got a real feel for the book. He's doing an ace job, and I think this is certainly going to let people know that he's out there."

"People are going to want to buy the first two issues of *Invasion!* because Todd McFarlane is a hot artist," says Helfer, "but the better story is the one Bart gets to draw in issue #3. It's got both the gloss of a good artist, and the substance of being the issue in which all the changes are made for the DC Universe."

Ex-Marvel writer Bill Mantlo is scripting *Invasion!*, mere months after leaving *Alpha Flight*, the book most current fans knew him from. "Bill Mantlo is doing his best damn writing ever," says Giffen. "He is going to surprise one hell of a lot of people. Really! I think a lot of his detractors are going to be taking a whole new look at him after this. We're really pleased with it. And I'm pleased to be working with him, because Bill was the guy who got me into the business. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have gotten my first job."

Will the Dominators reach exceed their grasp? What do you think?

Message From Space (1978)

"The story in *Invasion!* #1 and #2 is not just kick-ass action," says Giffen. "We take our time and focus in on specific heroes and actions. A lot of the decisions behind who was to become a focal character came

because of space considerations. It also depended on how cooperative the creative people that regularly handled these characters were. Those writers who cooperated with us—their heroes got the biggest play. It's really that simple. Two people who have been wonderfully helpful are Cary Bates and George Perez. I could have used about seven or eight more like them. Other people were as helpful as they wanted to be, or could be. You get that in any office situation. There are going to be some people who are more willing to help than others."

Giffen continues. "The funny thing about this is, people are going to say 'Gee, there's not a lot of the Justice League in here. Weren't you cooperating? It just didn't work out that way. We gave as many heroes as we could the play we needed, and we tried to figure out who was needed to tell the story. We really didn't have the consideration of 'Let's get the commercial ones up front.' If we had wanted to do commercial, it would have basically been a *Justice League* and *Batman* story. We really tried to let the story dictate who we were using rather than the 'please-the-fanboy' attitude that some people use in their books. I think we got a better story out of it this way."

Giffen started the story of *Invasion!* by tossing strange plot ideas for *Justice League International* at Andy Helfer. "Despite other rumors and innuendos, this was one of the stories I threw out. I had just finished reading *Red Storm Rising*, and I had this idea of a global conflict in my mind. I have always liked the *Mars Attacks* cards, so I said to Andy, 'Let me do a multi-parter in the *Justice League* of just a here-come-the-aliens-to-Earth story. He liked the idea and we were going to do it, but apparently up at the DC editorial retreat, they were looking for the next cross-over idea. Andy mentioned my idea for the *Justice League* story and asked about bringing the other heroes in. The next thing I know, Andy called me and said 'Hey, guess who's doing the next cross-over?'"

"As for the rumors that we stole the story from another comic writer, this is all I have to say. This person may have turned in a similar idea to Andy—about aliens, and super-heroes losing their powers—but it's not the most original idea in the world. I guess they just liked the slant I put on it, which is mainly the play I give the alien races. They liked what I was doing especially with the precendents of the alien *Legion* villains."

Although Giffen has enjoyed doing *Invasion!*, he states that he will never do a cross-over book again. "Never. Not even if it would help the space program. Even if I had cancer and it was the only cure. It's draining. I used to wonder why no one ever did two in a row, because these are big projects at DC. There is a high visibility there. It can make or break a career, and it *is* financially rewarding. But it is draining. It is exhausting, and I'm not ambitious enough to do something like this again. After doing *Invasion!* everything else is going to seem so easy. I'll never complain about the *Legion* again, because it's a breeze compared to this. Andy's edited two in a row, so he holds the record. He's got one of those jackets now. You know, the kind with no holes in the sleeves which tie around in back?"

What does Helfer think about his second cross-over series, and will he do a third one? "No way! I'm finished. My cross-over days are over. I've done it. I've done it all—now I can die a happy man."

Comparing *Invasion!* to *Millennium*, Helfer found it a much easier series to do. "It's much easier because the cross-overs are much less important. What I mean by that is that in *Millennium*, without the cross-overs, we had no story. It tied them all together, but if you read an issue of *Millennium* without reading the cross-overs, you wouldn't know what the hell was going on. With *Invasion!* you don't have to read any of the cross-overs unless you want to. That made it a lot easier. What's made it harder is that when I was doing *Millennium*, I had three books on the schedule, and now I'm doing eight monthly books. Some guy named Kevin Dooley helps me out as my assistant, but my schedule is a lot fuller."

Invasion! will premiere in October for $2.95. "For this, you get 80 pages of thrills and spills, with no ads," says Helfer. "I think *Invasion!* will succeed because it gives readers the best of both worlds. It gives them the action, the adventure, and the excitement—the fights—that they expect of a super-hero comic. At the same time, it gives them a new dimension . . . a new way to look at the DC Universe. Unlike a book like last year's *Millennium*, this doesn't preach to the converted. That is, it's not so tied up and absorbed in the continuity that new readers cannot understand what's going on. A new DC reader—a new comic reader—can read this book and enjoy it. At the same time, we redefine what it means to be a hero in the DC Universe." ●

Rick Flagg of *Suicide Squad* considers the implications of life under the invaders.

THE FANTAGAPHICS 500 COMPLETE CATALOGUE: WINTER 1988/89

On the next 15 pages, you will find a listing of all the comics, books and magazines published by Fantagraphics Books that are still in print . . . all five hundred of them.

Ever since we founded Fantagraphics Books close to a decade ago, we've felt very strongly that comics–if they have any value at all–should remain available to new readers without being submitted to usurious back-issue prices or manufactured scarcity. This ideal of comics as lasting artifacts rather than eccentric, perishable "collector's items" would have been considered laughable a mere 15 years ago. It looks like times have caught up with us.

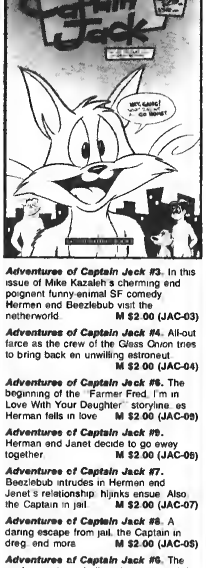
With only a few exceptions, we've succeeded in keeping most of the work we've published in print. As certain popular titles have sold out their earliest issues (*Love and Rockets, Neat Stuff, Usagi Yojimbo*) we've made this material available again in book collections. When our book collections have sold out, we've published second or third editions. As a result, 90% of the work we've ever published is available here and now–straight from us.

We believe that the resultant selection of comics, books, and magazines is by far the strongest line offered by any American publisher–and that anyone who takes the time to leaf through the catalogue is guaranteed to stop at least a couple of times, discovering a publication he or someone he knows would want to read and enjoy.

Recent entries in this catalogue (releases from September through December) are marked with a bullet. If you just peruse the catalogue looking for bullets, you're sure to find a wealth of fascinating new projects; on the other hand, if you read the whole catalogue carefully, you may be surprised to discover that some titles are still available–or, indeed, that they were published by Fantagraphics Books in the first place.

Happy browsing!

Gary Groth and Kim Thompson
Publishers, FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS



Adventures of Captain Jack #3. In this issue of Mike Kazaleh's charming and poignant funny-animal SF comedy, Hermen and Beezlebub visit the netherworld. **M $2.00 (JAC-03)**

Adventures of Captain Jack #4. All-out farce as the crew of the Glass Onion tries to bring back an unwilling astronaut. **M $2.00 (JAC-04)**

Adventures of Captain Jack #6. The beginning of the "Farmer Fred, I'm in Love With Your Daughter" storyline as Herman falls in love. **M $2.00 (JAC-06)**

Adventures of Captain Jack #8. Herman and Janet decide to go away together. **M $2.00 (JAC-08)**

Adventures of Captain Jack #7. Beezlebub intrudes in Herman and Janet's relationship; hijinks ensue. Also: the Captain in jail. **M $2.00 (JAC-07)**

Adventures of Captain Jack #8. A daring escape from jail, the Captain in drag, and more. **M $2.00 (JAC-08)**

Adventures of Captain Jack #9. The pool game to end all pool games, and the conclusion of the storyline. **M $2.00 (JAC-09)**

Adventures of Captain Jack #10. Back in Detroit, the *Glass Onion* starts looking for a way to pay the bills. **M $2.00 (JAC-10)**

Adventures of Captain Jack #11. The Detroit mob is brought into play. **M $2.00 (JAC-11)**

• ***Adventures of Captain Jack #12.*** A few revelations, and the group splits up for good. **M $2.00 (JAC-12)**

• ***Adventures of Mr. Pyrilina #1.*** Mahendra (*Prime Cuts*) Singh's polymorphously perverse hero indulges in murder, torture, and worse in dreamlike landscapes. If David Lynch had directed the movie version of *Little Nemo in Slumberland* from designs by Milo Manara, it might have looked like this. **M $2.50 (PYRI-1)**

Amazing Heroes #4. Frank Miller speaks on writing and drawing *Daredevil* and provides a new cover. Note: All issues through #18 carry the *Star Wars* and *Star Hawks* strips, while *Star Wars* continues through #59. **$1.95 (AH-004)**

Amazing Heroes #5. Bruce Jones talks about cover-featured Ka-Zar, plus a look at Steve Ditko's classic Spider-Man stories. **$1.95 (AH-005)**

Amazing Heroes #6. A Bill Sienkiewicz cover painting of Moon Knight leads into an examination of the series, plus a history of the Doom Patrol. **$1.95 (AH-006)**

Amazing Heroes #7. Gil Kane talks about the Micronauts and does the cover, plus a history of the T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents. **$1.95 (AH-007)**

Amazing Heroes #8. Scott Shaw! cover of Captain Carrot, plus a hero history of Captain Atom, and the parodies of Superman. **$1.95 (AH-008)**

Amazing Heroes #10. A history of the Metal Men. Terry Austin cover. Denys Cowan interviewed. **$1.95 (AH-010)**

Amazing Heroes #11. Horror issue: A preview of DC's *Night Force*, history of Swamp Thing, and the Warren Magazines. **$1.95 (AH-011)**

Amazing Heroes #12. Paul Smith's first major interview, with a Smith *X-Men* cover. Shang-Chi history. **$1.95 (AH-012)**

Amazing Heroes #13. A special look at *Star Wars* in the comics, with an extra-long chapter of the strip and a Kevin Nowlen cover. Plus a history of Thor. **$2.50 (AH-013)**

Amazing Heroes #14. *Camelot 3000* previewed with unpublished Brian Bolland cover; Captain Marvel history; collecting Spider-Man cheap. **$1.95 (AH-014)**

Amazing Heroes #15. Keith Giffen interviewed, the conclusion of the Captain Marvel history, and a Legion cover. **$1.95 (AH-015)**

Amazing Heroes #16. The first look at the New Mutants, with a Bob McLeod cover; a history of Green Arrow. **$1.95 (AH-016)**

Amazing Heroes #17. A look at Wolverine and the Marvel killers; a history of Supergirl, with a Kevin Nowlen cover. **$1.95 (AH-017)**

Amazing Heroes #18. Behind the scenes of *Nexus*, with a Steve Rude painted cover, plus the Supergirl history concludes. **$1.95 (AH-018)**

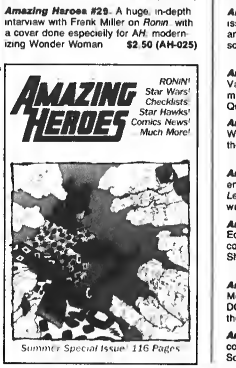
Amazing Heroes #19. A look at the *X-Men* revival, with an outrageous interview and a Joe Staton cover. The history is Ant-Man. **$1.95 (AH-019)**

Amazing Heroes #20. *Amethyst* is cover featured, plus an interview with Fred Hembeck. **$1.95 (AH-020)**

Amazing Heroes #23. This is a really dull issue; don't bother. **$1.95 (AH-023)**

Amazing Heroes #24. A preview of the *DNAgents*, plus a Gil Kane cover gallery and a look at the woman in Daredevil's life. **$1.95 (AH-024)**

Amazing Heroes #25. A huge, in-depth interview with Frank Miller on *Ronin*, with a cover done especially for AH; modernizing Wonder Woman. **$2.50 (AH-025)**



Amazing Heroes #26. Gray Morrow's *Edge of Chaos* is previewed, plus a history of Nick Fury. **$1.95 (AH-026)**

Amazing Heroes #27. The first of several Batman issues: Mike W. Barr on Batman, a Jim Aparo cover, and a history of the Batman of Earth 2. **$1.95 (AH-027)**

Amazing Heroes #28. A Gil Kane cover kicks off a *Sword of the Atom* issue, with a history of the original Atom in the back. **$1.95 (AH-028)**

Amazing Heroes #29. A preview of *American Flagg!*, with rare art and a special cover. Also: Valentino's checklist of DC imaginary tales. **$1.95 (AH-029)**

Amazing Heroes #30. A look behind DC's puzzling *Thriller*. **$1.95 (AH-030)**

Amazing Heroes #31. This all-star issue includes a full episode of *Star Hawks*, previews of *Star Raiders* and *Star Trek*, and an interview with ST artist Tom Sutton. **$2.50 (AH-031)**

Amazing Heroes #32. Somerset Holmes previewed, plus a history of Dr. Doom. **$1.95 (AH-032)**

Amazing Heroes #33. Behind the scenes of First's oddball *Mars* comic, the history of Doom continues, and Blacks in comics. **$1.95 (AH-033)**

Amazing Heroes #34. A preview of Joe Kubert's never-published *Redeemer* series, with a cover by Kubert—a collector's item of sorts. Plus a history of Enemy Ace. **$1.95 (AH-034)**

Amazing Heroes #35. Dan Jurgens interviewed, Kevin Nowlen illustrates a cover to go with the Infinity Five history. **$1.95 (AH-035)**

Amazing Heroes #36. A guide to the DC Universe: Roy Thomas on *Infinity Inc.*, and more. **$1.95 (AH-036)**

Amazing Heroes #37. The Rocketeer blasts off with a Dave Stevens interview, plus Dwight R. Decker's fantasy novelle "Skyborne" begins. **$1.95 (AH-037)**

Amazing Heroes #38. Wendy and Richard Pini are interviewed, plus a history of Nova. **$1.95 (AH-038)**

Amazing Heroes #39. The very first *Preview Special* issue—and some of these books *still* haven't come out! Lots of "might-have-beens" in this issue. **$3.50 (AH-039)**

Amazing Heroes #40. Another loser series previewed: *Sun-Runners*. Plus Iron Man history. **$1.95 (AH-040)**

Amazing Heroes #41. All-Superman issue, with a rare Wayne Boring cover and interview, plus Supas on the big screen, and an article on kryptonite. **$1.95 (AH-041)**

Amazing Heroes #42. Aardvark-Vanaheim issue, with a Sim/SabalQuegmire cover jam, an interview with Josh Quagmire, and more. **$1.95 (AH-042)**

Amazing Heroes #43. A look back at Warlock with a Willie Blyberg cover, plus the conclusion to "Skyborne". **$1.95 (AH-043)**

Amazing Heroes #44. Frank Cirocco and Terry Austin collaborate on an *Alien Legion* cover, plus Harlan Ellison on writing *Daredevil*. **$1.95 (AH-044)**

Amazing Heroes #45. Ace cover artist Ed Hannigan is interviewed, and contributes a dazzling cover, plus Sherlock Holmes in the comics. **$1.95 (AH-045)**

Amazing Heroes #46. A preview of Marvel's *Power Pack*, and an article on DC's hardcover/softcover plan (remember that?). **$1.95 (AH-046)**

Amazing Heroes #47. A Jack Kirby cover of the *New Gods*, plus a history of Son of Satan. **$1.95 (AH-047)**

Amazing Heroes #48. Behind the scenes of *Mister X*, with a Jaime Hernandez cover. Also: an article on the Bizarros. **$1.95 (AH-048)**

Amazing Heroes #49. A preview of Delgado, plus a look at the married super-heroes. **$1.95 (AH-049)**

Amazing Heroes #51. Continuity Comics previewed, with a Michael Golden cover. Plus, the history of the Atomic Knights. **$1.95 (AH-051)**

Amazing Heroes #52. A Brian Bolland Judge Dredd cover starts off a "Brit Invasion" issue, with histories of Dredd and Captain Britain, a guide to British fanzines, and more. **$1.95 (AH-052)**

Amazing Heroes #53. Bill Willingham speaks on *The Elementals*, plus *Mr. Monster*, and a packed mailbag about Harlan Ellison. **$1.95 (AH-053)**

Amazing Heroes #55. Bill Sienkiewicz is interviewed, and provides a cover of Wolverine picking his teeth. Double-sized issue also includes the conclusion of the complete history of the *X-Men*. **$4.50 (AH-055)**

Amazing Heroes #56. Special all-girls issue, with a Kevin Nowlen cover. Wonder Woman, Carol Danvers (Ms. Marvel), and behind the scenes of the Supergirl movie. **$1.95 (AH-056)**

Amazing Heroes #57. Mike Kaluta provides a cover for a preview of his *Starstruck* comic, plus a history of Power Man and Iron Fist. **$1.95 (AH-057)**

Amazing Heroes #58. Mike Baron speaks on the return of Nexus and the Badger, plus a short but potent interview with Alan Moore and a history of the Secret Six. **$1.95 (AH-058)**

Amazing Heroes #59. *Secret Wars* previewed, plus a hero history of Megnus, Robot Fighter. **$1.95 (AH-059)**

Amazing Heroes #60. A preview of four Bill Mantlo series is the occasion for a five-way jam cover by Leonardi, Potter, Mignola, Gordon, and Austin, plus the history of Sgt. Rock. **$1.95 (AH-060)**

Amazing Heroes #61. A preview of *Groo the Wanderer*, with an original Sergio Aragones cover. Plus the Silver Surfer history continues. **$1.95 (AH-061)**

Amazing Heroes #62. The second Preview Special, with an original cover by Jaime Hernandez, and listings for over 250 comics. Plus lots of exclusive art previews, and more. **$4.50 (AH-062)**

Amazing Heroes #63. Backstage with *The Masked Man*, and the ten best comics of 1984 revealed. **$1.95 (AH-063)**

Amazing Heroes #64. A look at the revamped Moon Knight, with a Chris Warner cover, plus a brief interview with Mark Evanier. **$1.95 (AH-064)**

Amazing Heroes #65. A striking John Bolton cover of *Black Dragon*, plus information on Solomon Kane, the history of Conan, and more. **$3.50 (AH-065)**

Amazing Heroes #66. *Crisis on Infinite Earths* previewed, with a George Perez cover. Also: a history of Dracula. **$1.95 (AH-066)**

Amazing Heroes #67. *Secret Wars II* previewed, plus *Star Trek* in the comics, and an interview with Neal Adams. **$1.95 (AH-067)**

Amazing Heroes #68. Special April Fool's issue, with a Keith Giffen *Ambush Bug* cover, a preview of the Bug, an interview with Donald Simpson, and an insane news column. **$1.95 (AH-068)**

Amazing Heroes #69. Frank Miller previews *Elektra* and *Dark Knight* with exclusive art, an interview, and a cover. Plus a history of the Phantom Stranger, and the final *Star Hawks* episode. **$1.95 (AH-069)**

Amazing Heroes #70. The Squadron Supreme invades, plus a directory to Plastic Man and a history of *Brave and Bold*. **$1.95 (AH-070)**

Amazing Heroes #72. A look at *West Coast Avengers*, histories of Man-Bat and Hawkeye. **$1.95 (AH-072)**

Amazing Heroes #73. A preview of *The Eternals*, plus a hero history of same. **$2.95 (AH-073)**

Amazing Heroes #74. A preview of *Futurians*, plus a goodbye to Supergirl. **$1.95 (AH-074)**

Amazing Heroes #75. A long chat with Chris Claremont, behind the scenes at Comico's *Robotech* comics, and a history of The Punisher. **$2.95 (AH-075)**

Amazing Heroes #76. The Hulk/Alpha Flight switchover in creative teams includes a John Byrne/Mike Mignola cover. Also: a history of Lois Lane. **$2.25 (AH-076)**

Amazing Heroes #77. Behind the scenes of Mr. Monster, with a Swamp Thing/Mr. Monster team-up by Steve Bissette, John Totleben, Michael T. Gilbert, and Bill Loebs; plus a history of Deadman. **$2.25 (AH-077)**

Amazing Heroes #78. Inside the Outsiders (to coin a phrase), plus an interview with Denis Kitchen and part one of the Justice League history. **$2.25 (AH-078)**

Amazing Heroes #79. Part two of the JLA history, a portfolio of Carol Lay's work, and the genesis of *DC Challenge*. **$2.25 (AH-079)**

Amazing Heroes #80. *Blood of the Innocent* is previewed, plus a history of Omega the Unknown. **$2.25 (AH-080)**

Amazing Heroes #81. A Tim Truman *Scout* cover leads off this issue, which also includes a long history of Atlas Comics. **$2.25 (AH-081)**

Amazing Heroes #82. An index to Marvel's mutants. **$2.25 (AH-082)**

Amazing Heroes #83. *X-Factor* previewed, with an original cover by Guice and Leyton, plus the mutants index, and Scott McCloud's "Small Press Watch" debuts. **$2.25 (AH-083)**

Amazing Heroes #84. The history of Batman, with a Steve Bissette cover, also: a look at Dmitri. **$2.25 (AH-084)**

Amazing Heroes #85. Alan Davis grants a feature-length interview, with a spectacular cover of all his characters; plus the end of the Batman history. **$2.25 (AH-085)**

Amazing Heroes #86. Behind the scenes of First's *Hawkmoon* series, plus a history of the Scarlet Witch. **$2.95 (AH-086)**

Amazing Heroes #87. Previews of *Lords of the Ultra Realm* and *Electric Warrior*. Okay, so they can't all be winners. **$2.25 (AH-087)**

Amazing Heroes #88. A preview of Howard Chaykin's *Shadow*, complete with the cover that gave Harlan Ellison a fit; plus a look at the new *American Flagg!* team. **$2.25 (AH-088)**

Amazing Heroes #89. An interview with Jim Starlin, a Hawkman history, and a preview of *Threat*. **$2.25 (AH-089)**

Amazing Heroes #90. An interview with Bruce Jones; a preview of *Comet Man*, and a cover by Dennis Fujitake. **$2.25 (AH-090)**

Amazing Heroes #91. The big Post-Crisis issue, with *everything* you wanted to know about DC's series, plus a George Perez cover. **$3.95 (AH-091)**

Amazing Heroes #92. Velentino is interviewed, also: a history of Dazzler and a fond look back at *normalman*. **$2.25 (AH-092)**

Amazing Heroes #93. This special *Demon* issue includes a history of the character, Matt Wagner's plans for the mini-series, and a Wagner cover. Also: Steve Englehart speaks. **$2.25 (AH-093)**

Amazing Heroes #94. Don Simpson talks about *Border Worlds*, a history of *Deathlok*, and an article by Trina Robbins. **$2.25 (AH-094)**

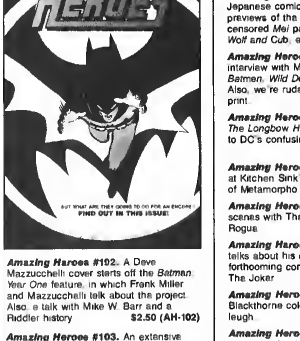
Amazing Heroes #95. Special Jonny Quest issue includes a cover by and interview with Doug Wildey, an episode guide to the TV series, and a preview of the comic. **$2.25 (AH-095)**

Amazing Heroes #99. An interview with Jim Starlin on the occasion of his switch to First, plus previews of *Eternity Smith* and *ESPers*. **$2.25 (AH-099)**

Amazing Heroes #99. *Elektra!* Sienkiewicz cover, interviews with Sienkiewicz and Miller, and an interview with Sergio Aragones. **$2.25 (AH-099)**

Amazing Heroes #100. Special Jack Kirby tribute includes an interview with the King by Mark Evanier, an analysis of why his art works as well as it does, a Kirby cover inked by Steve Rude, and a portfolio section that includes written and illustrated pieces by Steve Rude, Los Bros. Hernandez, John Romita, Dave Gibbons, Jerry Ordway, Scott Shaw!, Michael T. Gilbert, Stan Lee, Kevin O'Neill, and literally dozens more. **$3.00 (AH-100)**

***Amazing Heroes* #101.** A preview of Marvel's New Universe back when it was the next big thing; plus an interview with Peter David. **$2.50 (AH-101)**



***Amazing Heroes* #102.** A Dave Mazzucchelli cover starts off the *Batman: Year One* feature, in which Frank Miller and Mazzucchelli talk about the project. Also: a talk with Mike W. Barr and a Riddler history. **$2.50 (AH-102)**

***Amazing Heroes* #103.** An extensive interview with William Messner-Loebs. Bob Burden harrowingly escapes fleming death. Plus a history of the Creeper. **$2.50 (AH-103)**

***Amazing Heroes* #104.** Science fiction issue: preview of *Dynamo Joe*; an interview with David Michelinie; and a history of Green Lantern. **$2.50 (AH-104)**

***Amazing Heroes* #105.** An interview with Mark Evanier; the conclusion of the Green Lantern history; Dan Spiegle cover. **$2.50 (AH-105)**

***Amazing Heroes* #106.** George Perez Wonder Woman issue, including a history, a preview, and a cover. **$2.50 (AH-106)**

***Amazing Heroes* #107.** Black-and-whites: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles cover, plus Apple's Mike Catron, and more. **$2.50 (AH-107)**

***Amazing Heroes* #108.** An in-depth look at the Question and Captain Atom, plus an interview with Karl Kesel. **$2.50 (AH-108)**

***Amazing Heroes* #109.** Scott McCloud is interviewed; the DC's Who's Who checklists; and a look at Elite Comics. **$2.50 (AH-109)**

***Amazing Heroes* #110.** Marvel's *Fallen Angels* previewed, plus a history of Brother Voodoo. **$2.50 (AH-110)**

***Amazing Heroes* #111.** The hilarious Ty Templeton speaks, and speaks, and speaks. **$2.50 (AH-111)**

***Amazing Heroes* #112.** A preview of *Concrete*; the history of the Spectra; and Arrow Comics. **$2.50 (AH-112)**

***Amazing Heroes* #113.** An interview with the late Gardner Fox, plus a look into the Justice Machine. **$2.50 (AH-113)**

***Amazing Heroes* #114.** The Punisher previewed, with a Klaus Janson cover; the *Trollords* interview. **$2.50 (AH-114)**

***Amazing Heroes* #115.** The birth of a proud tradition: The first annual Swimsuit Issue! Cover by Kevin Nowlan, drawings by Bill Sienkiewicz, Mike Grell, Phil Foglio, Jaime Hernandez, Colleen Doran, Joe Staton, Mark Martin. **$3.00 (AH-115)**

***Amazing Heroes* #116.** Another preview of a doomed comic: *Matt Champion*. Nice Ernie Colon cover and interview, though. **$2.50 (AH-116)**

***Amazing Heroes* #117.** A *Captain EO* cover slipped onto this one, which also has an in-depth feature on Dark Horse Comics. **$2.50 (AH-117)**

***Amazing Heroes* #118.** Special Japanese comics issue! Includes previews of the Eclipse titles (with the censored *Mai* pages); a history of *Lone Wolf and Cub*; and more. **$2.50 (AH-118)**

***Amazing Heroes* #119.** A massive interview with Max Allan Collins on *Batman*, *Wild Dog*, *Ms. Tree*, and more. Also, we're rude to Harlan Ellison in print. **$2.50 (AH-119)**

***Amazing Heroes* #120.** Mike Grell on *The Longbow Hunters*; plus the new guide to DC's confusing continuity. **$2.50 (AH-120)**

***Amazing Heroes* #121.** An in-depth look at Kitchen Sink's *Alien Fire*, plus a history of Metamorpho. **$2.50 (AH-121)**

***Amazing Heroes* #122.** Behind the scenes with The Prowler; a history of Rogue. **$2.50 (AH-122)**

***Amazing Heroes* #123.** Frank Thorne talks about his career and his forthcoming comics, plus an article on The Joker. **$2.50 (AH-123)**

***Amazing Heroes* #124.** A preview of the Blackthorne color comics line. Good for a leugh. **$2.50 (AH-124)**

***Amazing Heroes* #125.** Frank Crocco is interviewed—plus a preview of *Marshall Law*. **$2.50 (AH-125)**

***Amazing Heroes* #126.** A preview of *Millennium*, plus an interview with Charles Vess. **$2.50 (AH-126)**

***Amazing Heroes* #127.** Features on Sterblaze graphic novels and the Assassin' group. **$2.50 (AH-127)**

***Amazing Heroes* #128.** Mike Baron speaks in a feature-length interview. Plus Hetrner, Mike Thibodeaux, and the first Sidney Mellon column. **$2.50 (AH-128)**

***Amazing Heroes* #129.** Funny-animal issue, with a Steven Gallacci interview, the making of the *Mighty Mouse* show, Freddy Milton speaks, and much more. **$2.550 (AH-129)**

***Amazing Heroes* #130.** Drawing *Blood*: J.M. DeMatteis and Kent Williams discuss their new series. Plus the Shadowline series. **$2.50 (AH-130)**

***Amazing Heroes* #131.** At the age of five, Comico is still going strong: cover by Bernie Mitraault and Steve Rude. Plus the Todd McFarlane interview. **$2.50 (AH-131)**

***Amazing Heroes* #132.** Howard Chaykin discusses *Blackhawk*, *American Flagg!*, *Time*², and many other things in a feature-length interview. **$2.50 (AH-132)**

***Amazing Heroes* #133.** The first squarebound *Preview Special* starts off with a Paul Chadwick/Michael T. Gilbert Concrete/Mr. Monster cover, and then goes on for 224 pages. An amazing compilation of all that's fit to print. **$5.50 (AH-133)**

***Amazing Heroes* #134.** A preview of *Excalibur*, plus an article on bad taste in comics. **$2.75 (AH-134)**

***Amazing Heroes* #135.** A massive Marv Wolfman interview, topped off with a Perez cover portrait. **$2.75 (AH-135)**

***Amazing Heroes* #136.** The all-star Superman issue includes interviews with the creative staff, a gallery, an interview with Kirk Alyn, an essay section on what Superman means to Mike Barr, Jan Strnad, Frederik Pohl, and others, and a superb Bill Sienkiewicz cover. **$3.50 (AH-136)**

***Amazing Heroes* #137.** Special Flash Gordon issue features interviews with Dan Barry, Buster Crabbe, Al Williamson, and others, plus a portfolio section of tributes to *Flash*. **$2.75 (AH-137)**

***Amazing Heroes* #138.** The second annual Swimsuit Issue starts off with an eye-popping cover by Neal Adams and continues with art by Paul Chadwick, Stan Sakai, Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez, Jerry Ordway, and dozens more. **$3.50 (AH-138)**

***Amazing Heroes* #139.** Dark Horse's *Aliens* is previewed with a Mark Nelson cover, plus an interview with Eric Shenower and an article on adapting *Godzilla*. **$2.75 (AH-139)**

***Amazing Heroes* #140.** Marvel's bi-weekly previewed, with a Wolverine/Swamp Thing/Shang-Chi cover by Tom Grindberg. **$2.75 (AH-140)**

***Amazing Heroes* #141.** Special all-women issue includes a cover by Colleen Doran, and brief interviews with 25 women cartoonists and editors. **$2.75 (AH-141)**

***Amazing Heroes* #142.** *AH* wishes Eclipse a happy 10th anniversary. Dean Mullaney, cet yronwode, Tim Truman, and Fred Burke are interviewed. **$2.75 (AH-142)**

***Amazing Heroes* #144.** Matt Howarth is interviewed, and the extensive "gays in comics" article concludes. **$2.75 (AH-144)**

***Amazing Heroes* #145.** Captain America! Mark Gruenwald is interviewed and provides the cover, plus a history of the star-spangled Avenger. **$2.95 (AH-145)**

***Amazing Heroes* #147.** Donald Simpson speaks out and provides a Megaton Man cover. Also, the end of the Cap history, and Sidney Mellon on the *Hulk* TV movie. **$2.95 (AH-147)**

***Amazing Heroes* #148.** The creators of *Suburban Nightmares*—Larry Hancock and Michael Cherkas—speak up. Also, a history of Lex Luthor, and a history of the Black Widow. **$2.95 (AH-148)**

***Amazing Heroes* #149.** John Ostrander on the new *Grimjack*; with a gory cover by Flint Henry. **$2.95 (AH-149)**

● ***Amazing Heroes* #150.** The first issue in the new format features a Wendy and Richard Pini interview, an article on the new *Superman* TV series, a history of Plastic Man, the beginning of Korkus and Cawley's "Cartoon Corner", and an article on Superman's having become a murderer. **$2.55 (AH-150)**

● ***Amazing Heroes* #151.** Bill Sienkiewicz provides a *Stray Toasters* cover and interview. Also: Previews of *The Prisoner* and *Plastic Man*, a new column by Heidi MacDonald, Sidney Mellon's final column, and Stephen King as he appeared in the comics. **$2.55 (AH-151)**

● ***Amazing Heroes* #152.** Special focus on *Black Orchid*: Dave McKeen and Neil Gaiman are interviewed, and McKean provides the cover. Also: the scoop on *Invasion*. **$2.55 (AH-152)**

● ***Amazing Heroes* #153.** NDW Comics is featured with an extensive preview, and a special interview with cover artist Ken Steacy. **$2.55 (AH-153)**

● ***Amazing Heroes* #154.** Mike W. Barr's new series, *The Maze Agency* from Comico, is given the in-depth treatment. **$2.55 (AH-154)**

● ***Amazing Heroes* #155.** Klaus Janson, artist of *The Punisher* and *Dark Knight* inker, is featured in an Interview. **$2.55 (AH-155)**

● ***Amazing Heroes* #156.** George Perez returns to the Titans and takes over Superman! Reason enough for a full-length Perez interview, we think—and a full-color cover, too. **$2.55 (AH-156)**

● ***Amazing Heroes* #157.** The latest *Amazing Heroes Preview Special* edition, still squarebound, will feature a cover by Will Eisner of The Spirit meeting Batman. All this plus Dave Sim's favorite comics, and about six hundred previews of every comic coming in 1988. **$2.55 (AH-157)**

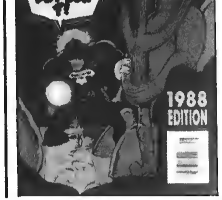
***Amazing Heroes Preview Special* #1.** This issue features a cover by Scott McCloud of *Zot!*, and over five hundred previews of coming comics, often with exclusive art. **$3.55 (AHPS-1)**

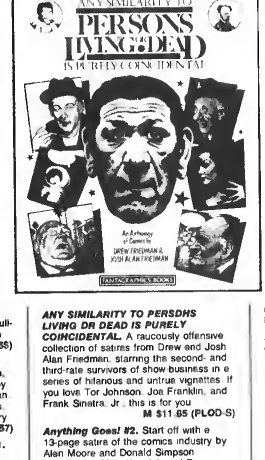
***Amazing Heroes Preview Special* #2.** Steve Rude does the cover honors this time; seida from that, it's more of the same. **$4.50 (AHPS-2)**

***Amazing Heroes Preview Special* #3.** Stephen DeStefano's Mazing Man is the cover guest. Titles that never came out, and more! **$4.50 (AHPS-3)**

***Amazing Heroes Preview Special* #4.** A great jam cover by Dave Sim and Sergio Aragonés, featuring Cerebus and Groo, top off this installment. **$4.50 (AHPS-4)**

***Amazing Heroes Preview Special* #5.** So big it had to go squarebound, this issue features a cover is a Concrete/Mr. Monster team-up by Paul Chadwick and Michael T. Gilbert—plus hundreds and hundreds of previews. **$4.50 (AHPS-5)**





ANY SIMILARITY TO PERSDHS LIVIHG DR DEAD IS PURELY COIHCIDENTAL. A raucously offensive collection of satires from Drew and Josh Alan Friedman, starring the second- and third-rate survivors of show-business in a series of hilarious and untrue vignettes. If you love Tor Johnson, Joe Franklin, and Frank Sinatra, Jr., this is for you. **M $11.95 (PLOD-S)**

***Anything Goes!* #2.** Start off with a 13-page satire of the comics industry by Alan Moore and Donald Simpson (assisted by Mike Kazaleh and Eric Vincent), add on a color "Locas Tambien" story by Jaime Hernandez, and finish off with an original Frank Miller cover. **M $2.00 (AG-002)**

***Anything Goes!* #3.** Dave Sim contributes a brief Cerebus vignette, also a Mike Kazaleh *Captain Jack* story, a Marv Wolfman/Gary Kwapisz Dracula tale, plus Howard Crusa, Pat Boyette, Mark Wheatley, and Dan Clowes, full-color Cerebus cover by Neal Adams. **M $2.00 (AG-003)**

***Anything Goes!* #4.** A George Perez cover starts off this issue, which includes a Gilbert Hernandez "Heartbreak Soup" story, a collaboration between Trina Robbins and Ann Saba, plus Peter Bagge, Dan Clowes, more. **M $2.00 (AG-004)**

***Anything Goes!* #5.** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, plus R. Crumb, Jim Rohn, and a *Journey* story by William Messner-Loebs. **$2.00 (AG-005)**

***Anything Goes!* #6.** Stan Sakai, Usagi Yojimbo cover painting, plus stories (now in black-and-white) by George Metzger, Matt Howarth, Phil Elliott, Eddie Campbell, Tom Sutton, and Mark Martin. **M $2.00 (AG-006)**

AT HOME WITH RICK GEARY. A stunning compilation of Geary's wickedly surreal short pieces from the *National Lampoon* and elsewhere, augmented with an eight-page color section and some rarely seen pieces. **$6.95 (GEAR-S)**
hardcover: $30.00 (GEAR-H)

● ***Bad News* #3.** Paul Kerasik, Merk Beyar, Mark Newgarden, Seth Tobocman, art spiegelman, Kaz, Jerry Moriarty, Ben Katchor, and others in a 48-page compilation of surreal and sinister comics and illustrations on the cutting edge. **M $3.50 (B-NEWS)**

● ***BARNEY AND THE BLUE HOTE.*** Loustal and Paringaux's dramatic chronicle of the rise and fall of a neurotic French jazzman, as seen through the eyes of his friends and associates. But the real standout in this 90-page, full-color graphic album is Loustal's art, a series of painted panels heavy with mood. **M $14.95 (BARNE)**

BUZZBOMB. *RAW* alumnus Kaz gets his own gigantic 44-page collection (11" x 15"), reprinting much of his work from *RAW* and other sources, plus several brand new pieces and an insane cover. This is the book one printer refused to print! **M $6.95 (BUZZ-1)**

***Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy* #1.** A very funny magazine, with strips from J.R. Williams, Steve Lafler, Norman Dog, Lloyd Dangle, Michael Dougan, Jim Siergey, and Jerzy Szostek. **M $2.25 (CENT-1)**

***Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy* #2.** Work by Gilbert Hernandez, Matthew Finch, Craig Bartlett, Ted Blackman, and return appearances by Lafler, Williams, Siergey, Szostek, et al. **M $2.25 (CENT-2)**

***Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy* #3.** A nuclear cover starts off the issue, which boasts Craig Maynard, Joe Corrao, and more from Szostek, Dougan, Bartlett, Dangle, and Williams. **M $2.25 (CENT-3)**

***Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy* #4.** A Jaime Hernandez cover! And the insides feature Williams, Steake, Szostek, Finch, Bartlett, and more. **M $2.25 (CENT-4)**

***Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy* #5.** A Steve Lafler cover pokes fun of Ron and Nancy; the mysterious Tom Tomorrow continubtes a long strip, plus work by Bartlett, Siergey, and even editor Joe Sacco. **M $2.25 (CENT-5)**

***Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy* #6.** The Strategic Defense Umbrella is cover featured, in a story by William Clark. Also present are Atharton, Steake, Honeth, Bartlett, Dennis (Stickboy) Worden, and the so-called "L.A. Bastards". **M $2.50 (CENT-6)**

***Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy* #7.** More hilarious comics, including an anti-fanboy cover, and strips by Mitch Manzer, Paul Ollswang, Krystine Krytre, plus Worden, Corrao, Bartlett, and others. **M $2.50 (CENT-7)**

***Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy* #8.** The end of an era: Krystine Kryttre provides a striking cover for the magazine too funny for its time. **M $2.50 (CENT-8)**

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT-TIDE. Jan Strnad tells two fairy tales, illustrated by *Dalgoda* collaborator Danne Fujitaka and Tim Solliday. **$4.95 (CHILD)**

● ***Christmas With Superswine* #1.** Gary Fields's foul avenger returns in a one-shot special celebrating all the more loathesome aspects of Yuletide. Truly revolting. **$2.00 (SWINE)**

***The Comics Journal* #37.** A rare (early) interview from Jeanette Kahn, Marty Pasko interviewed, plus a *Star Wars* cover by John Workmen
$2.00 (CJ-037)

***The Comics Journal* #39.** The first epic-length *Journal* interview features Gil Kane, who talks about his three decades in comics, the recently-launched *Star Hawks* strip, and more
$2.00 (CJ-039)

***The Comics Journal* #40.** Jim Shooter, freshly hired as Marvel's editor-in-chief, talks about what he hopes to achieve in this position
$2.00 (CJ-040)

***The Comics Journal* #42.** Stan Lee is interviewed, with a cover by John Byrne
$2.00 (CJ-042)

***The Comics Journal* #43.** Neal Adams is the interview subject, and Scott Edelman dishes up some "Bullpen Bull"
$2.00 (CJ-043)

***The Comics Journal* #46.** The first half of a two-part interview with Will Eisner conducted by Catherine Yronwode; Denny O'Neil reviews *A Contract With God*, painted Eisner cover of The Spirit
$2.00 (CJ-046)

***The Comics Journal* #47.** The second half of the Eisner interview, plus Steve Skeates's infamous "death of the super-heroes" essay, with a ghoulish cover by Dennis Fujitake
$2.00 (CJ-047)

***The Comics Journal* #48.** A double-size issue featuring an inside look at Marvel's original "prestige format" book, *Weirdworld*, plus Len Wein, Samuel R. Delany, and Kenneth Smith are interviewed. The only issue to include a color section!
$3.00 (CJ-048)

***The Comics Journal* #49.** An interview with the man and woman behind *Heavy Metal*, John Workman and Julie Simmons—plus a feature-length essay on The X-Men by Carol Kalish and Richard Howell
$2.00 (CJ-049)

***The Comics Journal* #51.** Frank Brunner stomps off from Marvel and leaves them with this cover-featured essay; also, an interview with Howard Chaykin, in the days before *American Flagg!*
$2.00 (CJ-051)

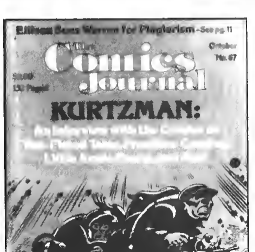
***The Comics Journal* #52.** Rick Marschall talks about his days at the syndicates and his days at Marvel; Jim Shooter gets into an argument with a letter-writer, and a cover of Plastic Man, Elongated Man, and Mr. Fantastic by Dennis Fujitake
$2.00 (CJ-052)

***The Comics Journal* #54.** An interview with Marshall Rogers, Al Capp grants his last interview to Rick Marschall, and a cover of Batman and Moon Knight by Bill Sienkiewicz
$2.00 (CJ-054)

***The Comics Journal* #55.** Jack C. Harris talks about the joys of comic books in the dopiest interview ever run in *The Comics Journal*, plus a portfolio of work by John Bolton, and a Gil Kane cover
$2.00 (CJ-055)

***The Comics Journal* #59.** An interview with (ahem) Michael Fleisher in which he talks about throwing people into the air so that they burn up. Also, Roy Thomas's resignation from Marvel, and Neal Adams's hilarious answer to Bill Sienkiewicz's cover is the full-page back cover
$2.00 (CJ-056)

***The Comics Journal* #59.** A Daredevil-Elektra cover by Frank Miller goes with an essay on the "visual alarm" of his work; also, the world's goofiest panel discussion take place among Jim Shooter, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman, Mark Evanier, Martin Pasko, and Gary Groth
$2.00 (CJ-058)



***The Comics Journal* #59.** *Heavy Metal* editor Ted White is interviewed; Greg Potter on the career of Jack Kirby, and what may be the single most brutal *Comics Journal* review ever written (the target: *Detectives, Inc.*). Also, an original cover painting by Ken Macklin
$2.95 (CJ-059)

***The Comics Journal* #60.** An essay on the long-gone EC comics, an interview with Jim Shooter, and a cover by Fred Hembeck of the big guy himself
$2.95 (CJ-060)

***The Comics Journal* #61.** Roy Thomas talks about his career at Marvel and explains why he left; Jack Jackson is also interviewed, and the covers are by Gil Kane and Frank Miller/Terry Austin
$3.50 (CJ-061)

***The Comics Journal* #62.** Brand new DC editor Dick Giordano is interviewed, and provides a Batman cover to boot. Rick Marschall on the birth of *Life* magazine, and the fallout from the *Detectives, Inc.* review
$2.95 (CJ-062)

***The Comics Journal* #63.** A gratuitously enormous issue (338 pages), featuring interviews with Wandy and Richard Pini, Steve Englehart, and Denis Kitchen; articles by Danny O'Neil and Will Eisner; an original Harlan Ellison TV treatment with illustrations by Gil Kane; plus covers by Wendy Pini and Bill Sienkiewicz, and a 50-page letters section
$6.50 (CJ-063)

***The Comics Journal* #64.** Gil Kane and Danny O'Neil engage in a debate over the comics field; *The Comics Journal*'s critics reply to a nasty letter from Bill Mantlo, and a news story on the birth of the direct-sales market
$2.95 (CJ-064)

***The Comics Journal* #65.** Art Spiegelman and Francoise Mouly talk about *RAW*, *Maus*, and Topps Bubblegum Cards; while Harlan Ellison confronts an anonymous nemesis in an extensive essay
$2.95 (CJ-065)

***The Comics Journal* #66.** Denny O'Neil is interviewed twice in this issue; Dennis Fujitake Batman cover
$2.95 (CJ-066)

***The Comics Journal* #67.** A feature-length interview with Harvey Kurtzman, from his EC days to *Little Annie Fanny* and beyond; Harlan Ellison sues Jim Warren for plagiarism, and the legendary first review of *Love and Rockets*
$2.95 (CJ-067)

***The Comics Journal* #68.** Panel discussions abound, featuring Frank Miller, Jim Shooter, Dick Giordano, Denny O'Neil, Roy Thomas, Louise Jones, and Julius Schwartz. Plus an essay on Shooter's storytelling versus Gene Colan's
$2.95 (CJ-068)

***The Comics Journal* #70.** Frank Miller's first major interview, conducted by Dwight R. Decker; also, Marvel announces its royalty plan
$3.50 (CJ-070)

***The Comics Journal* #71.** Super-agent Mike Friedrich talks about his ideas for the direct-sales market, Pete Poplaski contributes a cover of a fight between the Hulk and Popeye, and Gary Groth on Miller's *Daredevil*
$2.95 (CJ-071)

***The Comics Journal* #72.** Neal Adams talks about everything; he deals like and provides a *Ms. Mystic* cover
$2.95 (CJ-072)

***The Comics Journal* #73.** Curt Swan reminisces about his long career, Dwight Decker talks about Carl Barks, and a grim column on the subject of suicides among cartoonists
$2.95 (CJ-073)

***The Comics Journal* #74.** Special "highend-low" issue features an X-Men cover and Louise Jones and Chris Claremont discussing the X-Men, as well as a big argument among the editors of *RAW* and the editors of *The Comics Journal* about art and things like that
$2.95 (CJ-074)

***The Comics Journal* #75.** Jan Strnad laments his experiences as the hands of Marvel editors in the cover feature, "My Brilliant Career at Marvel"; also, Gil Kane, John Byrne, and Jack Jackson on panels. Cover by Kevin Nowlan
$2.95 (CJ-075)

***The Comics Journal* #77.** A big fight over the merits of Frank Miller's *Daredevil* is cover featured this time around; also, a Marvel Comics panel with John Byrne, Frank Miller, Carol Kalish, and Tom DeFalco, and the Max Allan Collins interview
$2.95 (CJ-077)

***The Comics Journal* #78.** Marv Wolfman and George Perez talk about the *Teen Titans*; an editorial on "Marvel's War with the Press"; and Harlan Ellison contributes a column on Hollywoodspeak
$2.95 (CJ-078)

***The Comics Journal* #79.** Marv Wolfman and George Perez talk about the *Teen Titans*; an editorial on "Marvel's War with the Press"; and Harlan Ellison contributes a column on Hollywoodspeak
$2.95 (CJ-079)

***The Comics Journal* #80.** The second halves of the Wolfman and Perez interviews; Carter Scholz enreges the readership with an essay on how art has become a commodity, and Jaime Hernandez provides the cover
$3.50 (CJ-080)

***The Comics Journal* #81.** The definitive William M. Gaines interview is showcased with a Bill Stout EC parody cover; Jan Strnad writes an essay on creator's rights, and Bhob Stewart discusses the relevance of EC Comics
$2.95 (CJ-081)

***The Comics Journal* #82.** First half of a huge Dave Sim interview (and, oddly enough, of a huge Dave Sim cover); the story on how Marvel scooped Lucasfilm on *The Empire Strikes Back*, and Harlan Ellison talks about lonely women
$2.95 (CJ-082)

***The Comics Journal* #83.** The conclusion of both the Sim interview and the Sim cover, "How to Be a Comics Publisher," and Harlan Ellison on pride and achievement
$2.95 (CJ-083)

***The Comics Journal* #84.** Michael T. Gilbert is the cover featured interviewee; plus columns by Harlan Ellison and Rick Marschall
$2.95 (CJ-084)

***The Comics Journal* #85.** Robert Kanigher is unleashed in the first half of an interview; Jan Strnad unleashes a firestorm by advocating a ratings system for comics, cover by Joe Kubert
$2.95 (CJ-085)

***The Comics Journal* #86.** The conclusion of the acidic Kanigher interview, plus a big feature on Tintin, and Kenneth Smith reviews *Love and Rockets* and *RAW*
$2.95 (CJ-086)

***The Comics Journal* #87.** Interviews with George Metzger and Phil Yeh, and Heidi MacDonald decries fight scenes in comics, with a Don Rosa cover
$2.95 (CJ-087)

***The Comics Journal* #88.** The debate over rating comics shifts into overdrive, with panels involving Jim Shooter, Mike Gold, Denis Kitchen, Jan Strnad, and Gary Groth—plus a rabble-rousing cover
$2.95 (CJ-088)

***The Comics Journal* #89.** Interviews with and by Eisner, a cover by Eisner, and Carter Scholz on Stanislaw Lem
$2.95 (CJ-089)

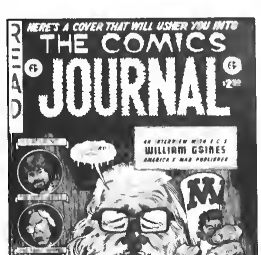
***The Comics Journal* #90.** A Williamson talks about his career from EC to *Star Wars*, Harlan Ellison admires Ed Asner in print, and more
$3.50 (CJ-090)

***The Comics Journal* #91.** Special convention issue includes panels with Gil Kane, Bill Sienkiewicz, Howard Chaykin, Harvey Kurtzman, Joe Kubert, and more; plus the story of how Marvel squelched Dave Sim's Wolverocah
$2.95 (CJ-091)

***The Comics Journal* #92.** Special underground issue, featuring interviews with Gilbert Shelton and Leonard Rifas, a "depressing assessment" by Denis Kitchen, the first story on Marvel's shameful art vaults, and the first "Summer Reading List"
$2.95 (CJ-092)

***The Comics Journal* #93.** Interviews with Alan Moore, Steve Bissette, and John Totleben on *Swamp Thing*, with a spectacular cover painting by the artists; plus the story of how Pacific Comics went up in flames
$2.95 (CJ-093)

***The Comics Journal* #94.** This special international issue features comics from Japan, Italy, France, and Malaysia
$2.95 (CJ-094)



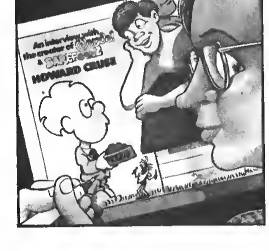
***The Comics Journal* #95.** Golden Age *Captain Marvel* artist C.C. Beck offers up a candid interview, plus a women-in-comics panel featuring Wandy Pini, Mary Wilshire, and Trina Robbins
$2.95 (CJ-095)

***The Comics Journal* #96.** An interview with '50s "mystery artist" Howard Nostrand, and the first chunk of Dale Luciano's enormously far-reaching "Newave Survey"
$2.95 (CJ-096)

***The Comics Journal* #97.** Robert Crumb contributes a cover to this issue, spotlighting interview subject *American Splendor*'s Harvey Pekar. Also, two *Journal* writers debate sexism in *Beetle Bailey*, plus the legendary "Little Fucks" memo, allegedly from Jim Shooter
$2.95 (CJ-097)

***The Comics Journal* #98.** Artist's artist Alex Toth is interviewed, and this cover feature is Jan Strnad's "Alternative Comics Cadaver Derby" (Guess the joke's on you there, Jan, you Mad Dog you). The Derbyish cover is by Kevin Nowlan
$2.95 (CJ-098)

***The Comics Journal* #99.** *Neil the Horse*'s Arn Saba talks about dancing and comics in the feature interview. Scott Edelman writes about flying with Stan Lee in his "Ethics" column, and Heidi MacDonald diagnoses what's wrong with The X-Men. Plus more of the "Newave Survey"
$2.95 (CJ-099)



***The Comics Journal* #101.** A feature-length interview with Frank Miller at the cusp of his career, plus the David Singer letters, Jan Strnad on *Shatter*, the continuing Newave Comics Survey, Mike Gold on *Shatter*, and the Summer Reading List
$2.95 (CJ-101)

***The Comics Journal* #102.** Hel Foster's last interview! Also, an interview with Ray "3-D" Zone, Deni Loubert on illiteracy, ethics in the comics, and more
$2.95 (CJ-102)

***The Comics Journal* #103.** Michael Kaluta is interviewed and provides the cover. Harlan Ellison and Stan Lee debate; R.C. Harvey on sex and sexism in comics, and the forgotten work of Rudy Palais
$2.95 (CJ-103)

***The Comics Journal* #104.** Skip Williamson of *Snappy Sammy Smoot* fame is interviewed, as is Justin Green. Also, R.C. Harvey psycho-analyzes super-heroes, Scott Edelman talks about hypocritical obituaries, and Steve Schanes explains how to promote comics
$2.95 (CJ-104)

***The Comics Journal* #105.** A full issue on the Jack Kirby art battle, including a fierce essay by Frank Miller, an interview with Kirby, more news of Marvel's art vault, Ken Smith, Gil Kane, and Wendy Pini discuss Marvel's conduct. Also, Dave Sim's "Declaration of Independents"
$2.95 (CJ-105)

***The Comics Journal* #107.** Bill Sienkiewicz is interviewed and provides an Elektra cover. Jan Strnad laments the state of the direct-sales shops; a satirical piece on really bad comics; Richard Pini tries to subvert the comics industry through subtlety; and Scott Edelman on misogyny in the comics world
$2.95 (CJ-107)

***The Comics Journal* #108.** A feature-length interview with Milton Caniff, a complete *Corto Maltese* episode, with an extensive biography of Hugo Pratt, and a column from Rick Oliver
$2.95 (CJ-108)

***The Comics Journal* #109.** Howard Chaykin interviewed once again, talks about *The Shadow*, *American Flagg!*, *Time*^{3}, and selling out. Plus a debate on censorship, a nasty review of *Dark Knight*, and more
$2.95 (CJ-109)

***The Comics Journal* #110.** Mike Baron is interviewed, and Steve Rude draws his portrait for the cover. Also, C.C. Beck argues against name credit in comic books, a parent sues a storeowner for selling a "Mature Readers" comic to a kid, and a letters page all about the Jack Kirby scendal
$2.95 (CJ-110)

***The Comics Journal* #111.** An interview with gay cartoonist Howard Cruse, plus an interview with Dan Dey
$2.95 (CJ-111)

***The Comics Journal* #112.** The first half of the amazingly comprehensive Mark Evanier interview, in which Evanier dissects the comics industry from its beginnings to now. Also, Richard McEnroe on "Why I Can't Write in the Mighty Marvel Manner"
$3.50 (CJ-112)

***The Comics Journal* #113.** The Evanier interview continues. Also, a discussion between Gil Kane and R. Crumb, a guest editorial by R. Fiore, and Richard Piel and Dave Sim fight to the death on the letters page
$3.50 (CJ-113)

***The Comics Journal* #114.** A sizeable interview with Jay (*Nard 'n Pat*) Lynch kicks off the issue, which also includes Roy Thomas's reminiscence of Gardner Fox, plus a first-person story about the birth and death of Atlas Comics by editor Jeff Rovin
$3.50 (CJ-114)

***The Comics Journal* #115.** The legendary Fleisher/Ellison/*Journal* lawsuit issue, with a staggering wraparound cover by Donald Simpson featuring Jim Shooter; testimony from Ellison, Jim Shooter, Gary Groth, and others; notes from the jurors; and an introduction by Ellison. 144 pages of legal tomfoolery.
$2.95 (CJ-115)

***The Comics Journal* #116.** Special *Watchmen* issue heralds the super-hero comic of the decade. (It's also the last super-hero cover on the *Journal*.) Featured are interviews with Moore and Gibbons, in-depth coverage of Jim Shooter's dismissal from Marvel, plus R. Crumb's sketchbook. Terrific original *Watchmen* cover by Gibbons.
$3.50 (CJ-116)

***The Comics Journal* #117.** Dave Stevens is interviewed and provides a self-parodying cheesecake cover. Also, Russ Heath speaks, Harvey Pekar reviews *Reid Fleming, World's Toughest Milkman*, Garry Trudeau speaks about arrogance and possibilities, and the Steve Rude sketchbook. Also, a farewell to Jim Shooter. **$3.50 (CJ-117)**

***The Comics Journal* #118.** Alan Moore and Frank Miller give their last word on ratings, a feature-length Moebius interview, a talk with Tony Auth, the beginning of an overview of the French comics scene, the Charles Burns sketchbook, and more. **$3.50 (CJ-118)**

***The Comics Journal* #121.** A talk with Robert Crumb—the most extensive interview ever done in the comics field, amply illustrated with rare art and photos—crowds out almost all the other features of the magazine. But there's also an article by Alan Moore on writing, a refutation of Dick Giordano's opinions on copyrights, and more. **$3.50 (CJ-121)**

***The Comics Journal* #122.** The special British issue starts off with a full-color Brian Bolland piece, then segues into interviews with John Wagner, Alan Grant, Mike McMahon, Kevin O'Neill, and the Escape gang. Plus a history of British comics, an interview with a First Amendment specialist, "Funnybook Roulette" on the lousy British comics, and the infamous *WAP!* editorial.
$3.95 (CJ-122)

***The Comics Journal* #123.** First-generation undergrounder Kim Deitch is interviewed, with a *Hollywoodland* cover. Also: Harvey Pekar on the potential of comics, transcripts of the Friendly Frank's obscenity trial, William Messner-Loebs's sketchbook, R. Crumb writes in, and reviews of *Blood* (bad) and *Yummy Fur* (good). **$3.50 (CJ-123)**

***The Comics Journal* #124.** The 50-page Jules Feiffer interview is one of the most complete ever run; also in this issue, the summer reading lists, a speech by Berke Breathed, Bill Griffith's sketchbook, and reviews of *Cerebus*, John Byrne's prose novel, and Howard Chaykin's work. The cover portrait of Feiffer is by David Levine. **$3.50 (CJ-124)**

• ***The Comics Journal* #125.** Berke Breathed is featured in a lengthy interview (with an original Bill the Cat cover by Breathed), plus Chester Brown's sketchbook, and considerably more.
$3.50 (CJ-125)

• ***The Comics Journal* #126.** At long last—a feature-length interview with *Love and Rockets'* Los Bros Hernandez, with a self-portrait jam on the cover.
$3.50 (CJ-126)

• ***The Comics Journal* #127.** *Calvin and Hobbes'* Bill Watterson is interviewed, with an original cover by Watterson. **$3.50 (CJ-127)**

***Critters* #4.** The funny animal anthology features continuing stories by Freddy Milton (*Gnuff*) and Steven A. Gallacci (*Birthright*), plus the premiere of Tom Stazer's *Lionheart*, and a Ken Macklin cover painting.
$2.00 (CRI-04)

***Critters* #5.** The first *Gnuff* story concludes, *Birthright* continues, plus Stan Sakai's *Nilson Groundthumper*. **$2.00 (CRI-05)**

***Critters* #6.** *Usagi Yojimbo* by Stan Sakai is cover featured, the first segment of *Birthright* ends with a Gallacci cover, and Mark Armstrong's series *Firecracker Jack* makes its first appearance in *Critters*. **$2.00 (CRI-06)**

***Critters* #8.** *Jack Bunny* by Armstrong is cover featured, Ty (*Stig's Inferno*) Templeton executes a superb Walt Kelly tribute, and the first major *Lionheart* serial begins—a tale of aliens and treachery.
$2.00 (CRI-08)

***Critters* #9.** Hallowe'en issue with a *Lionheart* cover and nightmare story, a special *Dog Boy* tale, and Gnuff takes refuge behind a mask for his graffiti depredations. **$2.00 (CRI-09)**

***Critters* #10.** Another *Usagi Yojimbo* cover to go with the first half of a two-part story, plus the continuations of *Gnuff* and *Lionheart* serials. **$2.00 (CRI-10)**

***Critters* #11.** First special double-sized Christmas issue, with work by Sakai (*Usagi Yojimbo*), Milton, Templeton, Stazer, Armstrong, then-newcomer Sam Kieth, and a cover painting by Ken Macklin. Over 60 pages of comics!
$3.50 (CRI-11)

***Critters* #12.** *Birthright II* premieres, as does Reed (*Omaha*) Waller and Kate Worley's *SpeakingStone*, plus a strange 10-page Sam Kieth *Is* story told almost entirely in pantomime. **$2.00 (CRI-12)**

***Critters* #13.** A romantic period piece for Gnuff debuts, *Birthright II* continues, and Mark Armstrong makes another appearance. **$2.00 (CRI-13)**

***Critters* #14.** The last regular *Usagi Yojimbo* story in *Critters* (with a cover), plus *Birthright II* and *Gnuff* **$2.00 (CRI-14)**

***Critters* #15.** Tim Fuller's *Blue Beagle* premieres, as does J.P. Morgan's *Fission Chicken* with an anti-Care Bears story. And *Birthright II* races on. **$2.00 (CRI-15)**

***Critters* #16.** Stan Sakai's Nilson Groundthumper is cover featured, plus *Birthright II* and the end of the *Gnuff* serial. **$2.00 (CRI-16)**

***Critters* #17.** *Birthright II* reaches as heartrending conclusion, and *Lionheart* returns to the fray for a political two-parter that takes place in the frozen North. **$2.00 (CRI-17)**

***Critters* #18.** A magnificent color cover by Jim Engel leads into an Engel story, plus the conclusion of "Lionheart" and a new "Blue Beagle" chapter.
$2.00 (CRI-18)

***Critters* #19.** A short "Sam and Max, Freelance Police" story by Steve Purcell is the star this issue. Also, "Gnuff" returns, and Fission Chicken faces his greatest challenge. **$2.00 (CRI-19)**

***Critters* #20.** Reed Waller and Kate Worley's "SpeakingStone" is cover featured; also, "Gnuff" and "Fission Chicken" continue. **$2.00 (CRI-20)**

***Critters* #21.** Sam Kieth's cover is a warped tribute to Carl Barks; the insides of the issue feature the continuations of "Gnuff" and "Fission Chicken," plus a "Lizards."
$2.00 (CRI-21)

***Critters* #22.** Tim Fuller does a Watchmen cover parody for this issue's "Watchdogs" Blue Beagle story. Also, "Gnuff" and "Fission Chicken" conclude, and William Van Horn's "Ambrose." **$2.00 (CR-22P)**

***Critters* #22.** Same as above, but with a "normal" cover **$2.00 (CR-22N)**

***Critters* #23.** This year's Christmas extravaganza features a flexi-disc starring Ty Templeton on one side and Alan Moore and the Sinister Ducks on the other. Also, 60 pages of comics, including a new Templeton strip and cover, plus strips from Freddy Milton, Tom Stazer, Sam Kieth, Tim Fuller, Mike Kazaleh, Bob Conway, and Marc Schirmeister—all on white paper, to boot!
$3.95 (CRI-23)

***Critters* #24.** "Gnuff" continues with the "giant tree" episode, plus another "Fission Chicken" story, and "Lizards." **$2.00 (CRI-24)**

***Critters* #25.** Lionheart returns in the first of a five-part paranoid espionage thriller, plus "Gnuff" continues and another "Angst" episode.
$2.00 (CRI-25)

***Critters* #26.** "Angst" is cover featured, "Lionheart" continues, and "Gnuff" concludes. **$2.00 (CRI-26)**

***Critters* #27.** Stan Sakai provides the cover and a new Nilson Groundthumper story—as well as a special contest—plus "Lionheart" continues and "Fission Chicken" pops up again. **$2.00 (CRI-27)**

***Critters* #28.** The Blue Beagle returns in a Miami Vice/Coca-Cola parody, plus the "Lionheart" and "Fission Chicken" serials. **$2.00 (CRI-28)**

***Critters* #29.** "Lionheart" climaxes, plus a "Lizards" episode, a one-page Captain Jack gag, and the German cartoonist Volker Reiche makes his U.S. debut. **$2.00 (CRI-29)**

***Critters* #30.** Special summer issue, with a Mark Martin cover painting and theological four-page story, plus "Angst," "Fission Chicken," and the return of "Gnuff" in "The Big Sneeze." Plus the winners of the Nilson Groundthumper contest. **$2.00 (CRI-30)**

***Critters* #31.** "Gnuff" continues, "Lizards" and "Blue Beagle" return, and Steve Bissette contributes a one-page, one-shot gag.
$2.00 (CRI-31)

***Critters* #32.** The continuations of "Gnuff" and "Lizards," a new "Fission Chicken" story, and a one-page gag by Stephen DeStefano! **$2.00 (CRI-32)**

• ***Critters* #33.** Fission Chicken nabs the cover spot, the end of the "Gnuff" serial, and "Angst." **$2.00 (CRI-33)**

• ***Critters* #34.** Blue Beagle battles Robohop, plus Fission Chicken and a story by new discovery Kyle Rothweiler.
$2.00 (CRI-34)

• ***Critters* #35.** "Lionheart" returns, another "Fission Chicken" story, and a Lela Dowling cover. **$2.00 (CRI-35)**

***Critters Special* #1.** Stan Sakai's "Nilson Groundthumper" series collected, with a new story added. **$2.00 (CRI-20)**

• ***THE COLLECTED FEIFFER BOOK ONE.*** Jules Feiffer, America's foremost satirical cartoonist: will see all his work from the early '50s to the early '70s collected here, beginning with his little-kude strip *Clifford*, a strip that in some ways anticipated *Peanuts*. 120 pages, shot from the originals.
$14.95 (FE-01S)
hardcover: $35.00 (FE-01H)

THE COMPLETE CRUMB COMICS BOOK ONE. This enthralling book is 90% never-before-published material, delving into the comics Crumb and his brother did while they were both teenagers. See Crumb's obsessions and characters begin to take shape—with eight pages of full color, and a biographical introduction by Crumb's lifelong friend Marty Pahls.
$12.95 (CR-01S)
hardcover: $30.00 (CR-01H)

THE COMPLETE CRUMB COMICS BOOK TWO. Some of the earliest published work of Crumb's, several completed Fritz the Cat stories that were never published, and dozens of sketchbook pages. Sixteen pages of color this time. **$14.95 (CR-02S)**
hardcover: $35.00 (CR-02S)

• ***THE COMPLETE CRUMB COMICS BOOK THREE.*** We reach "The Commercial Years" with Crumb's rarely-seen greeting cards, as well as the first few known Fritz stories. Plus lots of sketchbook material, and Pahls's continuing biography. **$14.95 (CR-03S)**
hardcover: $35.00 (CR-03H)
signed hardcover: $45.00 (CR-03Z)

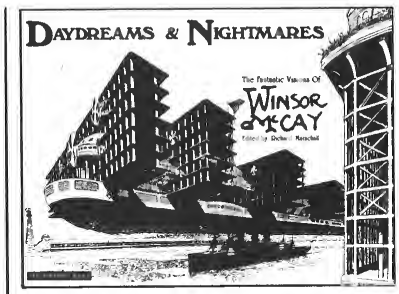
THE COMPLETE DICKIE DARE. Before *Steve Canyon*, before *Terry and the Pirates*, the great Milton Caniff cut his teeth on a raucous adventure strip: *Dickie Dare*. This volume reprints the entirety of the short-lived strip.
$14.95 (DICK-S)
hardcover: $35.00 (DICK-H)

THE COMPLETE LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE: 1931. If you think you know Little Orphan Annie, this volume may shock you—for Harold Gray was a consummate storyteller and brilliant draftsman whose accurate chronicles of a Depression-cowed America ring true 50 years later. This volume prints a year's worth of Annie strips, dailies and Sundays. **$14.95 (ANN-31)**

THE COMPLETE LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE: 1932. This album collects the "Cosmic City" serial, including the Sunday pages, which have never been reprinted before. **$14.95 (ANN-32)**

THE COMPLETE E.C. SEGAR POPEYE VOLUME TWO. In the giant 11" x 15" format, the first four books print the Sunday pages as well as the rarely seen "top strips" by Segar. Mort Walker supplies the introduction in this volume, and each volume features biographical essays by Rick Marschall and other scholars. **$14.95 (PO-02S)**
hardcover: $35.00 (PO-02H)

THE COMPLETE E.C. SEGAR POPEYE VOLUME THREE. This one features the complete Sea Hag/Goons adventure, plus an introduction by *Hagar the Horrible*'s Dik Browne. Over two years' worth of Sundays, meticulously shot and presented in the giant format, complete with top strips. **$14.95 (PO-03S)**
hardcover: $35.00 (PO-03H)



THE COMPLETE E.C. SEGAR POPEYE VOLUME FOUR. The final Sunday Popeyes written and drawn by Segar are also some of the finest—with a heavy emphasis on the antics of Wimpy. Still in the giant format. **$14.95 (PO-04S) hardcover: $30.00 (PO-04H)**

THE COMPLETE E.C. SEGAR POPEYE VOLUME FIVE. With this, the first volume of dailies, the format changes to the smaller 11" x 8½". In this volume, Popeye first shows up in *Thimble Theatre*. Introduction by Bobby London. **$14.95 (PO-05S) hardcover: $30.00 (PO-05H)**

THE COMPLETE E.C. SEGAR POPEYE VOLUME SIX. The action and adventure come fast and heavy as the Sea Hag menaces Popeye in this volume of daily strips. **$14.95 (PO-06S) hardcover: $30.00 (PO-06H)**

THE COMPLETE E.C. SEGAR POPEYE VOLUME SEVEN. This volume introduces King Blozo, who has a nervous breakdown and allows Popeye to take over his kingly duties. **$14.95 (PO-07S) hardcover: $30.00 (PO-07H)**

• ***THE COMPLETE E.C. SEGAR POPEYE VOLUME EIGHT.*** The latest in the series completes the Blozo sequence, which then segues into a story where Popeye founds his own kingdom. Also Popeye edits a newspaper, and Swee'Pea is introduced. With an introduction by science fiction writer Ron Goulart. **$14.95 (PO-08S) hardcover: $30.00 (PO-08H)**

DAYDREAMS AND NIGHTMARES: THE BLACK AND WHITE ART OF WINSOR McCAY. The work Winsor McCay did as editorial cartoonist has often been overlooked in favor of *Little Nemo*. The oversight is finally rectified in this stunning 180-page volume on high-quality paper, compiling page after page of amazing illustration, plus a handful of rare and little-known strips such as *Hungry Henrietta* and *Little Sammy Sneeze*. **$19.95 (OAY-DR)**

Dalgoda #2. Jan Strnad and Dennis Fujitake's striking full-color science-fiction series moves into high gear here, as Dal is attacked by a plant. Plus "Grimwood's Daughter," illustrated by Kevin Nowlen. **$1.50 (DAL-02)**

Dalgoda #3. A Zombdroid goes mad and Dal ends up leaping through a space warp to neutralize it. Plus "Grimwood" continues. **$1.50 (DAL-03)**

Dalgoda #4. Dal ends up on a tropical paradise . . . but everything isn't quite as it seems. **$1.50 (DAL-04)**

Dalgoda #5. Back on Earth, Dal works feverishly to stave off the invasion of the Nimp—but Posey gets an unexpected visitor! Plus "Grimwood." **$2.00 (DAL-05)**

Dalgoda #7. "The Canine Mutiny, Part One": Dal has absconded with his war ship to save his planet. Plus a full-color "Journey" installment by William Messner-Loebs. **$2.00 (DAL-07)**

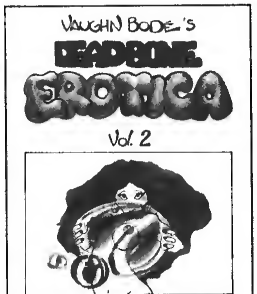
Dalgoda #8. In the climax to the first series, the crew rebels against Dalgoda and throws him out into space. Plus a short episode of "The Bolefriss Saga" by Alan Moore and Steve Parkhouse, never printed anywhere else! **$2.00 (DAL-08)**

Dalgoda: Flesh and Bones #1. Has the incredible pressure of hijacking the spaceship and squelching the revolt driven Dal crazy? Plus the first "real" episode of Moore and Parkhouse's "The Bolefriss Saga." **$2.00 (FLE-01)**

Dalgoda: Flesh and Bones #2. Dalgoda's first mate begins to have religious wet dreams about, the crew engages the Nimp in a shooting match—plus the conclusion of the first "Bolefriss Saga" episode. **$2.00 (FLE-02)**

Dalgoda: Flesh and Bones #3. Down on Dal's home planet, weird things begin to happen—and then a Nimp attack vehicle shows up. Plus a werewolf in "Raoul's Night Out," the latest episode of "The Bolefriss Saga." **$2.00 (FLE-03)**

Dalgoda: Flesh and Bones #4. The conclusion to the storyline, as Dalgoda saves the day and retires from any kind of heroics. Plus Raoul's night out winds down. **$2.00 (FLE-04)**



DEADBONE EROTICA BOOK TWO. A 48-page, full-color collection of the perverse and sexy strips the late Vaughn Bode executed for *Cavalier* and other men's magazines. Lizards and broads—politically incorrect, but fun. **M$12.95 (DEAD-2)**

Dinosaur Rex #1. It's Wodehouse meets ERB in this series by Jan Strnad and Henry Mayo. Plus "The Dragone of Summer," by William Messner-Loebs and Dennis Fujitake. **$2.00 (DINO-1)**

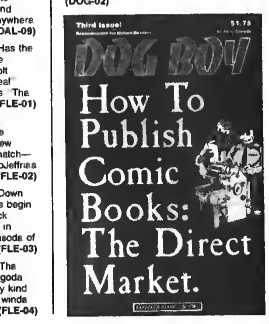
Dinosaur Rex #2. In the primeval jungle, our heroes come up against some unexpected adversaries. Plus bureaucrete deal with dinosaurs in 21st century Detroit. **$2.00 (DINO-2)**

Dinosaur Rex #3. The ripping conclusion to the saga, including dinosaur stampedes, sexy girls on dinosaurs, dinosaurs swimming down the Detroit river, and more! **$2.00 (DINO-3)**

THE OITKO COLLECTION VOLUME TWO. The co-creator of *Spider-Man* and *Dr. Strange* displays his political and philosophical concerns in a series of stories featuring Mister A. Plus "Avenging World." **$6.95 (DITK-2)**

Dog Boy #1. Werewolf bikers on the cover herald the return of Steve Leffler's goofball hero. **M $1.75 (DOG-01)**

Dog Boy #2. Astral bodies, Sir Isaac Newton, talking dolphins, astral bodies, and the suspension of gravity. **M $1.75 (DOG-02)**



Dog Boy #3. Dog Boy teaches how to publish comic books. **M $1.75 (DOG-03)**

Dog Boy #4. Ronald Reagan gets run over by Dog Girl. **M $1.75 (DOG-04)**

Dog Boy #5. Benb experiments with reality. **M $1.75 (DOG-05)**

Dog Boy #6. Alfred Knoot realizes he has a drinking problem, and Dog Boy helps him out of it. **M $1.75 (DOG-06)**

Dog Boy #8. Dog Boy and Alfred Knoot start an alternative newspaper, and Dog Girl goes graffiti-ing. **M $1.75 (DOG-08)**

Dog Boy #9. "Heartsong": The dancing cats are back, Benb is in Managua, and the paper thrives. **$1.75 (DOG-09)**

Dog Boy #10. Dog Boy has been responsible for too long and goes drag racin' to work out some tension. Great Big Daddy Roth tribute cover on this final issue. **M $2.00 (DOG-10)**

Don Rosa's Comics and Stories #1. Before Don Rosa became the heir apparent to Carl Barks at Gladstone Comics, he wrote and drew these extravagantly action-packed tales for fanzines. This one takes Launcelot Pertwilloby and his friends to the North Pole. **$2.95 (ROSA-1)**

Don Rosa's Comics and Stories #2. In the second issue, Pertwilloby journeys to the center of the Earth and nearly gets swallowed up by a Black Hole. **$2.95 (ROSA-2)**

Doomsday Squad #1. A tiny slice of history: John Byrne's first full-length story (*Doomsday + 1*), newly colored by Mark Wheatley, with a new Byrne cover and a *Dalgoda* vignette in back. **$2.00 (DOOM-1)**

Doomsday Squad #2. Another original John Byrne cover leads off the second reprint, with a full-color *Lloyd Llewellyn* story bringing up the rear. **$2.00 (DOOM-2)**

Doomsday Squad #4. A rare Neal Adams cover leads off this issue, which features spectacular underwater scenes that come alive in the coloring. Also *Miracle Squad* previewed. **$2.00 (DOOM-4)**

Doomsday Squad #5. A powerful Gil Kane cover leads off this fifth John Byrne story, and the back-up is a full-color *Captain Jack* story by Mike Kazaleh and Marc Schirmeister. **$2.00 (DOOM-5)**

Doomsday Squad #6. The finale of *Doomsday + 1*—art, as always, by John Byrne—with another Gil Kane cover, and the first full-color Holo Brothers story. **$2.00 (DOOM-6)**

Doomsday Squad #7. Never before published in color (or on a mass market basis), the final installment is Byrne's most accomplished work on the series. Plus a full-color Keif Llama story, and a Kane cover. **$2.00 (DOOM-7)**

FOCUS ON JACK COLE. Ron Goulart's biography of the creator of Plastic Man is supplemented by lots of illustrations (both from *Plastic Man* and Cole's magazine work), plus a complete checklist of Cole Plastic Man stories. **$5.95 (FOC-JC)**

Gil Kane's Savage! #1. The most exquisitely violent comic ever produced. *Savage* finds Kane at the top of his form. With a new Kane cover and an interview with Kane. **M $2.50 (SAVAG)**

Good Girls #1. Carol Lay's bizarre title follows the adventures of Miss Lonelyhearts, Monica Saunders—plus Irene Van de Kamp, the duck-billed millionaire heiress and her blind paramour. **M $2.00 (GOOD-1)**

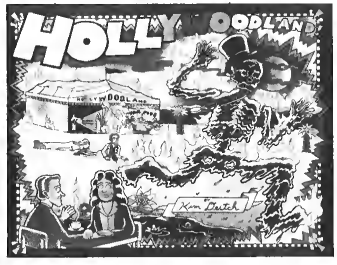
Good Girls #2. Monica undergoes further entanglements in love, and Irene encounters "Polite Society" and finds it wanting. **M $2.00 (GOOD-2)**

Good Girls #3. "Beauty and the Beast With Two Heads": is a book-length Irene story in which she is abducted to a remote island by a mad millionaire, while her would-be boyfriend gets into one mass affair another. Freaks galore in this one! **M $2.00 (GOOD-3)**

• ***Good Girls #4.*** The latest installment of the Irene saga finds her escaping the island from the previous issue. Plus "Self-Contained," about a society where women live without men, and "Catwomen A-Go-Go"! **M $2.00 (GOOD-4)**

Frank Frazetta's Thun'da #1. The only full-length comic Frazetta ever did, color by Henry Mayo. **$2.00 (FRAZ-1)**

Frank Frazetta's Untamed Love #1. A collection of Frazetta romance tales, colored by Mayo. **$2.00 (FRAZ-2)**



HOLLYWOODLAND. From the twisted mind of Kim Deitch comes this tribute to old movies, the La Brea Tar Pits, magic and make-believe. Originally serialized as a comic strip in the *L.A. Reader*. With a new cover, plus a behind-the-scenes essay with lots of sketches and photos. **$7.95 (HOLLY)**

THE HOLO. BROTHERS: CURSE OF THE BLOATED TOAD. Fresh from the pages of *Threat!* comes this combat collection of the entire first Holo. Brothers adventure, with a new cover painting. **$8.95 (HOLO-S)**

Honk! #1. The humor magazine for a new generation debuts with a Don Martin interview, plus strips from Daniel Clowes, Bob Boze Bell, Chester Brown, J.R. Williams, Marc Hempel, and Phil Elliott and Eddie Campbell. **M $2.75 (HONK-1)**

Honk! #2. Bill Watterson and Drew Friedman grant rare interviews. Plus a hilarious text piece by Alan Moore (art by Peter Baggi), as well as Bob Boze Bell, Elliott/Campbell, J.R. Williams, J.D. King, and more. **M $2.75 (HONK-2)**

Honk! #3. Matt Groening is interviewed in Hell, plus Hunt Emerson, and the usual gang of idiots: Williams, Elliott/Campbell, Hempel. **M $2.75 (HONK-3)**

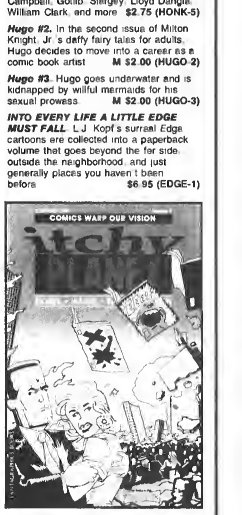
Honk! #4. A conversation with Ovid Boswell and a Reid Fleming cover, plus another Alan Moore essay, and work by Jim Sergey, John Callahan, Campbell/Elliott, Craig Bertlett. **M $2.75 (HONK-4)**

Honk! #5. Bill Griffith speaks on the pinhead, plus work by J.R. Williams, Elliott/Campbell, Gotlib, Sergey, Lloyd Dangle, William Clark, and more. **$2.75 (HONK-5)**

Hugo #2. In the second issue of Milton Knight, Jr.'s daffy fairy tales for adults, Hugo decides to move into a career as a comic book artist. **M $2.00 (HUGO-2)**

Hugo #3. Hugo goes underwater and is kidnapped by willful mermaids for his sexual prowess. **M $2.00 (HUGO-3)**

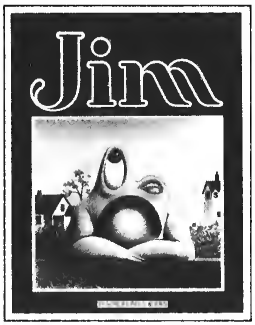
INTO EVERY LIFE A LITTLE EDGE MUST FALL. L.J. Kopf's surreal Edge cartoons are collected into a paperback volume that goes beyond the far side, outside the neighborhood, and just generally places you haven't been before. **$6.95 (EDGE-1)**



Itchy Planet #1. Leonard Rifas's political comic kicks off with a nuclear issue, with work by Larry (*Cartoon History of the Universe*) Gonick, Michael Dougan, Norman Dog, and others. **$2.25 (ITC-01)**

Itchy Planet #2. A gimlet gaze at the comics industry features work by Joyce Farmer, Mary Fleener, Michael Dougan, Dennis Worden, Nick Thorkelson, Brabner and DeStefano. **$2.25 (ITC-2)**

• ***Itchy Planet #3.*** Just in time for the elections comes the "Electoral" issue, with cover-to-cover comics by Larry Gonick, R. Diggs, Seth Tobocman, Scott Bieser, Peter Kuper, Spain, and many others. **$2.25 (ITC-03)**



JIM #1. Jim Woodring's startlingly eccentric magazine combines essays, illustrations, prose fiction, fake ads, and even a few comics to bring readers a view of its creator. The first issue includes "Sea Food Platter From Hell," the beginning of "Tales of Bears," and much more funny and scary material
M $2.25 (JIM-01)

JIM #2. Even stranger than the first issue, this one includes the tale of the "Invisible Hinge," "My Dream House," "A Walk in the Foot Hills," and the adventures of the cat "Big Red."
M $2.50 (JIM-02)

***Journey* #1B.** Fantagraphics' first issue of William Messner-Loebs's magnificent frontierland series, starring the indomitable Wolverine MacAlistaire.
$1.70 (JOU-15)

***Journey* #15.** The conclusion of the "Fort Miami" storyline capped by an unexpected upheaval—literally, in this case.
$1.70 (JOU-15)

***Journey* #17.** Having escaped the earthquake with his life, Wolverine tries to piece his life back together, and receives an unexpected visit from an old friend.
$2.00 (JOU-17)

***Journey* #18.** Wolverine rescues the pedantic Elmer Alyn Creft from the Hessian Brothers, but a blizzard comes up and they have to build a refuge.
$2.00 (JOU-18)

***Journey* #19.** Shortly before everyone drives each other nuts in the refuge, the blizzard ends, and the "New Hope" storyline, which will last the rest of the series, begins.
$2.00 (JOU-19)

***Journey* #20.** Wolverine saves a woman from fiery death. Craft is shocked to discover her identity, and an ancient evil is suspected.
$2.00 (JOU-20)

***Journey* #21.** The founders of New Hope give Wolverine and Craft some background on the city, and a sleepwalking girl offers a clue to the mysteries.
$2.00 (JOU-21)

***Journey* #22.** Tracking a wolf leads Wolverine to make an unexpected discovery, and Craft learns how to shoot a gun.
$2.00 (JOU-22)

***Journey* #23.** Wolverine is saved from the wolf, and finally delivers his much-delayed package to the correct recipient.
$2.00 (JOU-23)

***Journey* #24.** Wolverine is felled by an arrow, and Craft, intent on the mystery, interrogates the denizens of New Hope. And then it's time for two marriages.
$2.00 (JOU-24)

***Journey* #25.** Craft and Wolverine tie the knot with two New Hope women, and the white Indians turns up after the wedding.
$2.00 (JOU-25)

***Journey* #26.** Agatha goes sleepwalking once too often, Wolverine's nightmares become a reality, and Craft saves the day!
$2.00 (JOU-26)

***Journey* #27.** Some of the mysteries of New Hope are solved, while others remain. Wolverine goes to watch a man die. The end of the "New Hope" story.
$2.00 (JOU-27)

***Journey: Wardrums* #1.** The latest installment of the story, in which Josh battles beavers, fleas, and other vermin. Plus the beginnings of a plot...
$2.00 (WAR-01)

THE JOURNEY SAGA: TALL TALES. The first four issues of William Messner-Loebs's frontierland epic, including the amazing "beer chase" sequence and the rare *Cerebus* episodes. Plus a new text piece by Messner-Loebs, and introductions by Eisner and Simpson.
$6.95 (TALL-T)

• ***Kafka: The Execution.*** Leopoldo Durenona offers four magnificently-illustrated adaptations of narrow-chilling Franz Kafka stories, including the title story, "A Country Doctor," and two more.
$2.50 (KAFKA)

***Keif Llama* #1.** Matt Howarth's Keif Llama goes freelance and finds herself embroiled in a situation that could spell doom for a whole race—in the name of perfume.
$2.00 (KEIF-1)

***Keif Llama* #2.** Told entirely in flashback, this issue relates the worst baby-sitting experience in the history of the world.
$2.00 (KEIF-2)

***Keif Llama* #3.** "The Thorn Beneath the Rose": A flower show becomes a much bigger problem for Keif than she ever could have expected.
$2.00 (KEIF-3)

***Keif Llama* #4.** "Murder on the O'Brian Express." Keif end a cabin boy are the only survivors when an alien intelligence accidentally kills everyone on a luxury liner.
$2.00 (KEIF-4)

• ***Keif Llama* #5.** Unemployment is bad enough on Earth, but on Web-Base Edison-Blue, they cut off your oxygen.
$2.00 (KEIF-5)

• ***Keif Llama* #6.** Adrift in a Sargasso of space, Keif battles an unstoppable robotic war machine.
$2.00 (KEIF-6)

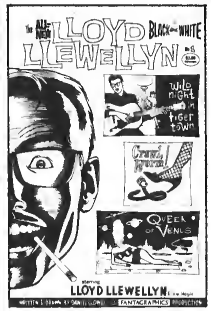
***Lloyd Llewellyn* #2.** LLoyd Llewellyn grows a giant brain and becomes "Lloyd Llewellyn, Egghead." Plus "Monster from the Edge of Nowhere," "Three Blue Teardrops," and more.
$2.25 (LLLL-2)

***Lloyd Llewellyn* #3.** The first full-length Lloyd adventure pits him against "The Crazy Hot-Rod Drop-Outs From Beyond Jupiter."
$2.25 (LLLL-3)

***Lloyd Llewellyn* #4.** Lloyd is picked up on a "502" charge, battles "The Goo," plus "Red Hoerning's Blues."
$2.25 (LLLL-4)

***Lloyd Llewellyn* #5.** Six—yes, six!—stories, including "The Battlin' American," "Maiden Japan," "The Eatniks," "Color Me Red."
$2.29 (LLLL-5)

***Lloyd Llewellyn* #6.** In "The Nightmare," Lloyd finds himself crossing the boundaries of time and space itself, while "Hound Blood" is a tale of murder and madness.
$2.29 (LLLL-6)



• ***Lloyd Llewellyn Special* #1.** Thirty two pages of all-new comic strips from Dan Clowes make this an un-a-lloyd pleasure: five Lloyd adventures, including "Dementia Precox" and "The Queen of Venus."
$2.00 (LLLL-S)

LOS TEJANOS. Jack Jackson's biography of Juan Seguin chronicles Texas's painful struggle for freedom in 136 scrupulously researched pages.
$6.95 (TEJAN)

***Love and Rockets* #1.** The seminal first issue, now available in a facsimile edition, with the covers from the original "small" edition as a bonus.
M $3.50 (LR-001)

***Love and Rockets* #23.** Chapter Three of "Human Diastrophism," plus the conclusion of "The Death of Speedy Ortiz."
M $2.25 (LR-023)

***Love and Rockets* #24.** More "Diastrophism," plus three Locas tales.
M $2.25 (LR-024)

***Love and Rockets* #29.** The conclusion to Gilbert's magnum opus "Human Diastrophism," plus the first half of the Locas story "Polar Bears."
M $2.29 (LR-026)

***Love and Rockets* #27.** The conclusion to "Polar Bears," plus a modernistic folk tale from Gilbert.
M $2.25 (LR-027)

• ***Love and Rockets* #28.** A tale of Hopey when she was young, plus a tale of the Locos when they were very young, and a Mario/Gilbert story in the surreal "Radio Zero" vein.
M $2.25 (LR-028)

• ***Love and Rockets Bonanza.*** A collection of hard-to-get pieces, including all the material that never appeared in the comic book (four stories done just for the book collections), plus the original T-shirt designs.
M $2.75 (LR-BON)

• ***Love and Rockets Book One: MUSIC FOR MECHANICS.*** This is where it all began, now in a striking new edition with superior printing and design, as well as a handsome hardcover edition with a full-color jacket. Includes "BEM" and the earliest "Locas."
M $11.95 (LRB1-S)
hardcover: $39.00 (LRB1-H)

Love and Rockets Book Two: CHELO'S BURDEN. Includes the very first "Heartbreak Soup" story, the re-edited "100 Rooms" with six extra pages added, plus "Maggie Vs Maniakk" and more.
M $9.95 (LRB2-S)
hardcover: $30.00 (LRB2-H)

Love and Rockets Book Three: LAS MUJERES PERQUOAS. The complete "Lost Women" saga, "Act of Contrition," and "The Laughing Sun." New story, "A Date With Hopey."
M $10.95 (LRB3-S)
hardcover: $30.00 (LRB3-H)

Love and Rockets Book Four: TEARS FROM HEAVEN. Errata Stigmata is cover featured, plus Jaime's Rocky stories, "Slug Fest," "Amor Y Cohetes," and a new four-page Gilbert story.
M $10.95 (LRB4-S)
hardcover: $30.00 (LRB4-H)

• ***Love and Rockets Book Five: HOUSE OF RAGING WOMEN.*** The continuing complete reprinting of *Love and Rockets*, this one focusing on wrestling, plus "An American in Palomar" and other Heartbreak Soup stories.
M $10.95 (LRB5-S)
hardcover: $39.00 (LRB5-H)

Love and Rockets: HEARTBREAK SOUP. Gilbert Hernandez's earliest "Heartbreak Soup" stories assembled chronologically, with an introduction by Alan Moore. Plus Errata Stigmata, and more.
M $10.95 (LR-HBS)

Love and Rockets: THE RETICENT HEART. Book Two in the "Heartbreak Soup" series, including "An American in Palomar," "Holidays in the Sun," and more. Introduction by Harvey Pekar.
M $10.95 (LR-TRC)

Love and Rockets: SHORT STORIES. Jaime Hernandez's earliest "Locas" stories, plus "100 Rooms" and "Love and the Rocket" (a.k.a. "Mechanics"), with an introduction by Carter Scholz.
M $10.95 (LR-SHO)

Love and Rockets: THE LOST WOMEN. The longest "Mechanics" story ever. "A Date With Hopey," plus tales of the wrestler Rene Titanon. Introduction by Brad Holland.
M $10.95 (LOST-W)

• ***LOVE AND ROCKETS CALENDAR #9.*** Twelve full-page illustrations by Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez (including jams), plus literally dozens of tiny spot illos of their many characters. All this: a color cover, and a usable calendar (with interesting and informative dates), as well.
$9.95 (CAL-69)

***Mechanics* #1.** Jaime Hernandez's classic "Mechanics" story from *Love and Rockets #2* given the full-color treatment by Paul (*Mister X*) Rivoche, with a new cover, plus a new color Penny Century story.
M $2.00 (MECH-1)

***Mechanics* #2.** "Mechanics" continues, the Penny story concludes, plus a "Rocky" tale—over 25 pages of Jaime Hernandez in color!
M $2.00 (MECH-2)

***Miracle Squad* #2.** When Sandra is kidnapped by Sweets O'Hanlon, the Miracle Squad swings into action! More '30s action from John Wooley and Terry Tidwell—in color for this issue only.
$2.00 (MIRA-2)

***Miracle Squad* #3.** Miracle Studios' new owner gets caught in a compromising situation, the Amazing Miracle is tossed from a high-flying blimp, and Sandra gets the drop on Sweets O'Hanlon.
$2.00 (MIRA-3)

***Miracle Squad* #4.** Sandra finally finds her sister—and the thugs find her! The setting for the climax is a gambling ship in international waters.
$2.00 (MIRA-4)

***Myron Moose Funnies* #1.** Bob Foster offers up full-length swipes at Dr. Seuss and Uncle Wiggily, plus more strips—and Bill Stout's outrageous "Frazetta with Moosea" *Weird Moose-Fantasy* cover.
$2.00 (MYRO-1)

***Myron Moose Funnies* #2.** Funny takes on *Batman*, *Plastic Men*, *Little Orphan Moose*, *Buck Rogers*, *Fritz the Cat*, *Citizen Kane*, and *Dick Tracy*.
$1.75 (MYRO-2)

***Myron Moose* #3.** Spoofs of *Tarzan*, *Little Nemo*, plus the unforgivable "Comic Book Fans" by Vincent Davis.
$1.75 (MYRO-3)

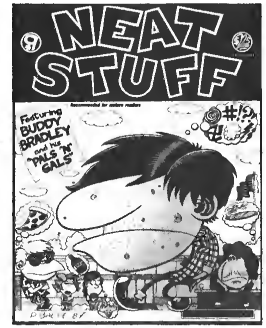
NEAT STUFF (BEST OF) A big 128-page collects the best of Peter Bagge's comic from the first five issues, with lots of Bradleys, Girly-Girl, and Junior—plus a rare story from *Weirdo*. "The Reject" and notes on the creation of Bagge's various continuing characters.
M $9.95 (BONS-1)

***Neat Stuff* #6.** A special all-Bradleys issue. Mom is pushed to the breaking point and rebels, while the Bradley kids, left to their own devices, very nearly annihilate one another.
M $2.25 (NS-006)

***Neat Stuff* #7.** Junior gives a whole series of "Reasons to Never Leave Your House," plus two Studs stories. Buddy Bradley goes back to nature, and reader participation pages featuring Girly-Girl.
M $2.25 (NS-007)

***Neat Stuff* #8.** Studs Kirby is on the air, a peek at Baba Bradley's diary, Girly-Girl and Chuckie-Boy play "Follow the Leader," Chet and Bunny Lewsey go for a ride, and the results of the reader participation pages.
M $2.25 (NS-008)

***Neat Stuff* #9.** Peter Bagge's "Hippy House" features Buddy Bradley in a 30-page epic that takes him back to the '60s.
M $2.25 (NS-009)



***Neat Stuff* #10.** A special "all-sissies issue" starts off with a Junior cover and story. Plus Studs's friend Tate acts like a pathetic weasel, and Chuckie-Boy puts in an appearance too.
M $2.25 (NS-010)

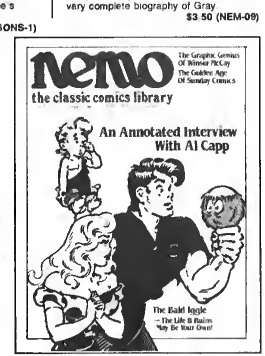
***Neat Stuff* #11.** An epic feature-length Studs Kirby story, as he returns to the radio and dukes it out with a rival talk show host—with hilarious and near-fatal effects.
M $2.50 (NS-011)

• ***Nail and Buzz in Time and Space* #1.** George Alec Effinger's radically bizarre science fiction series is strikingly illustrated by Henry Mayo in the first of three issues. "Terrific Park."
$2.00 (NEIL-1)

***NEMO* #2.** The second issue of the magazine of comics history features exclusive material on the birth of Superman, including a facsimile reprint of the Siegel/Shuster fanzine, interviews with both, plus Art Young and Fred Harman.
$3.50 (NEM-02)

***NEMO* #7.** Carl Barks and Floyd Gottfredson are interviewed, with a special color section of Barks's duck paintings.
$3.50 (NEM-07)

***NEMO* #8.** An all-*Little Orphan Annie* issue, including a reprint of a 1929 *LOA* tale (not collected in any book). Donald Phelps's analysis of the series, and a very complete biography of Gray.
$3.50 (NEM-09)



NEMO #10. Christmas issue, with a portfolio of cartoonists' Christmas cards. Also, Gustave Verbeek's incredible *Upside-Downs*, *Momma*'s Mell Lazarus interviewed, and *Mutt and Jeff*.
$3.50 (NEM-10)

NEMO #11. The premiere of Walker and Browne's *Sam's Strip*, Charles Dana Gibson portfolio and cover, and James Montgomery Flagg. **$3.50 (NEM-11)**

NEMO #12 Jack Williamson and Lee Elias's classic sf strip *Beyond Mars*, penwoman of the past Rose O'Neill, Frank King's most fantastic strip, and the cartoonists who fought World War II.
$3.50 (NEM-12)

NEMO #13. A violent sequence from Will Gould's *Red Barry*, plus penman of the past TAD Dorgan. **$3.50 (NEM-13)**

NEMO #15. Special "adventure comics" issue features a long sequence from Milton Caniff's *Dickie Dare*, plus *Tim Tyler's Luck*, *Hairbreadth Harry*, and a long "European Heroes" installment.
$3.50 (NEM-15)

NEMO #16. Special *Huckleberry Finn* issue, with looks at the adaptations of the classic strip. Also, George Herriman's early strip, *Baron Bean*, the conclusion of *Hairbreadth Harry*, and the art of Joseph Clement Coll. **$3.50 (NEM-16)**

NEMO #18. *Li'l Abner*'s classic "Bald Iggle" sequence, plus a hilarious speech by Capp, his final interview, and a portfolio of Winsor McCay's illustration work. **$3.50 (NEM-18)**

NEMO #19. Alfred Andriola's *Kerry Drake* in a complete episode, *Chief Wahoo*, the political art of Frank King, and Russell Patterson. **$3.50 (NEM-19)**

NEMO #20. Gustave Verbeek's nightmarish *Terrors of the Tiny Tads*, *Oaky Doaks*, plus a special section of strip promotion with rare art. Cover by Alex Raymond. **$3.50 (NEM-20)**

NEMO #21. A huge helping of Jack Kent's classic *King Aroo*, Percy (*Skippy*) Crosby's paintings, and Harold Gray's little-known Western series, *Little Joe*.
$3.50 (NEM-21)

NEMO #22. A special section on Jimmy Swinnerton, including a portfolio of rare work, plus *Joe Palooka*, the cartoons of John Held, Jr., and the way the political cartoonists saw the labor disputes.
$3.50 (NEM-22)

NEMO #23. A complete episode of *Little Orphan Annie* from 1937, a look back at *Hi and Lois*, Fontaine Fox's assistant reminisces, plus *Sam's Strip*.
$3.50 (NEM-23)

NEMO #24. Special all-Rube Goldberg issue, with a long article, two personal reminiscences, a portfolio of *Boob McNutt* and classic "inventions." **$3.50 (NEM-24)**

NEMO #25. Ageless female cartoonist Edwina interviewed, plus Milton Caniff's advertising work, and first-person recollections by John Wheeler on Bud Fisher, TAD, and more.
$3.50 (NEM-25)

NEMO #26. A lavish portfolio of the animal work of T.S. Sullivant, an article on *Henry*, the authentic history of Everett True, and cartooning contests. **$3.95 (NEM-26)**

NEMO #28. Special "ethnic images" issue, including a shocking array of racist cartoons (lampooning Blacks, Jews, Chinese, Irishmen, and *many* others) from the early part of the century, plus a selection from *Torchy Brown*. **$3.95 (NEM-28)**

NEW YORK NEW YORK. Using a wide diversity of styles, Peter Kuper's startling look at the city to end all cities runs the gamut from satirical jibes to sinister fantasies. Plus a few swipes at Ronald Reagan, just on general principle, of course. With a two-page full-color collage illustration, and a text introduction by Kuper.
M $9.95 (N-YORK)

Particle Dreams #1. The nice, large magazine format is the best showcase so far for Matt Howarth's nightmares and fantasies, here featuring Kaif Llama. This issue: "Shark Hunt," "Solar Piracy," and "Kill Her," plus an introduction by professional would-be punk Lou Stathis. **M $2.25 (PD-001)**

Particle Dreams #2. "This Fear of Gods" begins, plus "Poke and Stagger Stuff," and "I Steel Love Lucy." More Kaif Llama adventures. **M $2.25 (PD-002)**

Particle Dreams #3. "This Fear Of Gods" concludes, plus three ultra-shorts to wrap up the issue.
M $2.25 (PD-003)

Particle Dreams #4. Spectacular full-length dream sequence: "Aground in Shadow." As Kaif herself puts it: "Hungry things in the mud . . . ick!"
M $2.25 (PD-004)

Particle Dreams #5. Another off-world expedition for Kaif LLama: "Fayth."
M $2.25 (PD-005)

Particle Dreams #6. The mini-series ends with a cluster of short-short stories, including two neverending Mobius loop stories you can cut out and assemble.
M $2.25 (PD-006)

Prime Cuts #1. Spectacular premiere issue of the anthology magazine of the future features all-new material by R. and Aline Crumb, Don Seda, Drew Friedman, Susan Catherine, Eddie Campbell, Justin Green, Alec Stevens (adapting Lovecraft) plus two full-color Cliff Sterrett *Polly and Her Pals* pages, and the beginnings of "Rory Rendall Singing Cowboy" and Flaubert's "Dictionary of Received Ideas" illustrated by Rick Geary.
M $3.50 (PC-001)

Prime Cuts #2. Gilbert Hernandez cover, full-color Kim Deitch illustration of Hell—plus Alex Toth, Mark Martin, Skip Williamson, Joe Sacco, Richard Sala, Mark Martin, Spain, Don Seda, Phil Elliott, and more! **M $3.50 (PC-002)**

Prime Cuts #3. Rick Geary's 10-page "The Abominable Mrs. Pearcy," plus new work by Kim Deitch, Charles Burns, Michael Dougan, Chester Brown, and more. **M $3.50 (PC-003)**

Prime Cuts #4. A harrowing 20-page "Sinner" story by Munoz and Sampayo, plus Sala, Dougan, Kopf, Stevens, M. Singh, Burns, and the rest of the gang.
M $3.50 (PC-004)

Prime Cuts #5. Special humor issue starts off with Drew Friedman cover, plus work by Kim Deitch, Norman Dog, Mary Fleener, L.J. Kopf, Kenny Be, Joe Sacco, Franquin, classic strips by Russ Johnson and Jack Cole. **M $3.50 (PC-005)**

Prime Cuts #6. Gabriel and F. Solano Lopez's shattering drama "Ana" begins. Also, Spain's "Chicago '68," Daryl Hutchinson adapts Lovecraft, "Rory Randall," Franquin, Flaubert/Geary. **M $3.50 (PC-001)**

Prime Cuts #7. Dan Clowes, Joost Swarte, Paul Ollsweng, L.J. Kopf, Craig Maynard, plus the ongoing works of Franquin and Solano Lopez, and the end of "Rory Randall."
M $3.95 (PC-007)

Prime Cuts #8. Peter Kuper adapts Kafka, a pre-Journey story from William Messner-Loebs's archives, a new story from Richard Sala, plus Solano Lopez and Franquin, and Flaubert/Geary as always. **M $3.95 (PC-008)**

Prime Cuts #9. Harvey Pekar and Gary Kwapisz team, plus Linzee Arnold, Carol Tyler, and the shattering 30-page conclusion to "Ana." **M $3.95 (PC-009)**

PRINCE VALIANT BOOK 1: "The Prophecy." Hal Foster's very earliest adventures of his knightly hero. Witness his early training, his first view of Camelot, and other classic sequences. Oversize books, in spectacular full color. **$14.95 (VAL-001)**

PRINCE VALIANT BOOK 2: "The Singing Sword." Magic, sea battles, and swordsmanship predominate in the second year of the strip. **$14.95 (VAL-002)**

● ***PRINCE VALIANT BOOK 3: "Knights of the Round Table."*** Val gets the ultimate reward for devotion to his king in the third full-color collection.
$14.95 (VAL-03)

● ***PRINCE VALIANT BOOK FOUR: "The Menace of the Hun."*** Valiant goes off to fight the evil Mongol invaders, plus other tales of the noble prince.
$14.95 (VAL-04)

PRINCE VALIANT BOOK 29: "Monastery of the Demons." The monks have a very special way of frightening off brigands in this story from 1961-62. **$8.95 (VAL-29)**

PRINCE VALIANT BOOK 30: "Arn, Son of Valiant." The young prince is featured in this episode from 1962.
$9.95 (VAL-30)

PRINCE VALIANT BOOK 31: "A Joust For Aleta." Valiant's beautiful wife ends up with more squires than she needs in these episodes from 1963. To date, the latest reprint in the series.
$9.95 (VAL-031)

● ***RALPH STEADMAN'S AMERICA.*** Hunter S. Thompson's traveling companion and gonzo cartoonist Ralph Steadman casts an acid pen on the Home of the Brave and the Free, from Richard Nixon to Disneyland, from Viet Nam vets to Republicans. With an especially depressing new cover, and an intro by Thompson himself.
M $14.95 (AMER-S)
hardcover: $35.00 (AMER-H)
signed hardcover: $45.00 (AMER-Z)

THE REAPER OF LOVE. Finally collected under one cover, all of Berni Wrightson's earliest escapades, including the classic "Uncle Bill's Barrel," the rarely-seen "Beneath the Dignity of the Apes," a sketchbook section, and much *more*. 148 pages. **$12.95 (REAP-S)**

● ***THE SCUM ALSO RISES.*** Old-time undergrounder Skip Williamson has collected his very best work from two decades into a 144-page book, including eight pages of color, sketchbook material, a new Ronald Reagan story—plus all the Snappy Sammy Smoot stories you could possibly want. **M $14.95 (SCUMA)**

Sinner #1. Jose Munoz and Carlos Sampayo's great detective series opens with "Talkin' With Joe," an "origin" story of sorts for the New York private eye.
M $2.25 (SIN-01)

Sinner #2. Alack Sinner's first case leads to madness and despair: "The Webster Case." Plus a radical horror story from Uruguay, illustrated (in black and red) by the legendary Alberto Breccia. **M $2.95 (SIN-02)**

Sinner #3. "The Filmore Case" is the second Sinner story (from 1975), and it's backed up by a new "Sudor Sudaca" tale by Munoz and Sampayo: the anti-military "Making Men."
M $2.95 (SIN-03)

Stickboy #1. Dennis Worden's crudely-drawn hero suffers angst, unemployment, employment, nuclear holocaust, joggers, yuppies, sexual frustration, and a penis that talks back in a story titled "F.T.W."
M $2.25 (STIC-1)

● ***Street Music #1.*** Under a full-color Richard Sala cover, Mark Burbey's anthology includes work by Rich Larson, Mark Martin, Jules Feiffer, Carol Tyler, and many others. 48 pages. **M $2.75 (STRE-1)**

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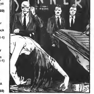

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What I want to know is, what happened to the Mystery Men? You know the guys I'm talking about. Dudes (or Dudettes) on the up-and-up who decided to make their world a better place by putting on a pair of tight-fitting longjohns, giving themselves a weird nickname and going out to bash the heads of penny-ante crooks and local mobsters. Yeah, those guys. Whatever happened to them? Everywhere I look nowadays I see teenage deformity groups or super-ninjas. You gotta have a super-power nowadays if you want to make it with the fans, even if it's a really dumb super-power or one every other hero this side of Superman has. Some guy who's spent his entire childhood and adult life obsessed with justice and has turned himself into a living weapon? Can he fly? Does he fart plutonium? Then forget it, man.

Time was the four-colors were thronging with these masked vigilantes and the super-powered heroes were in the minority. Then World War II came along and the average reader wasn't satisfied by the good-guys beating the tar out of minor-league burglars (always represented by Rondo Hatton look-alikes dressed in French-cut black and white striped pullovers, a cloth cap and a domino mask). Now they had to knock the stuffing out of Nazis and the land of the Rising Sun, and most of the Mystery Men were just too provincial to do the job. Sure, they were great at cleaning up the Bowery and making Hell's Kitchen safe for Mom and Pop again, but who'd really believe Sandman delivering a roundhouse to Hitler's jaw while saying "Take that, you Ratzi!!"?

No, the Second World War was the super-heroes' chance to shine and they've remained in the spotlight, more or less, ever since.

The arrival of the Marvel Age almost proved to be the last nail in the Mystery Man's coffin. While the then-new House of Ideas had a couple of old-fashioned non-powered characters (Hawkeye, Iron Man, The Black Panther) the vast majority of its heroes were not only super-powered, but bordering on the freakish.

In my opinion, having powers beyond those of mortal man thrust upon a charactrer—whether through accident of birth or scientific backfire—does not automatically boost them to "heroic" status. Being a hero, in the truist sense of the word, calls for a realization on the character's part that he is capable of reshaping society, not through the usual acceptable forms of public expression, but through direct physical action. Usually this calls for someone with a strong sense of "right" and "wrong" and the single-mindedness to do what they consider Right, regardless of the situation. Now, in the Real World people who do these things are called vigilantes and are known to do as much harm as good. In the four-colors, however, where things are often Black and White, we are treated to a world where vigilantes never abuse the civil rights of others (unless they're from outer space or monsters, then it's okay) and are content to play the roles of judge and jury . . . but not executioner.

So here are my choices for the Ten Best Non-Powered Heroes, their mortality making them all the more special in this day and age of gods-on-earth and genetic mutations. Even though they're "ordinary humans," they're still out there playing hardball.

TEN BEST NON-POWERED HEROES

by N.A. COLLINS

1) BATMAN

Okay, let's get back to the godhead. While Batman is known to be inspired by the pulp hero The Shadow, he has gone on to eclipse his progenitor. Batman's origin, as melodramatic as it may seem to Post-War readers, is the raw grist of legend—as Miller has proven with *Dark Knight* and "Year One"—and the template for damn near every other origin story in the history of comics. Batman is driven by twin demons, guilt (for having survived an attack that left his family dead) and anger (at the unfairness of life, and a world that would allow him to be orphaned brutally). These deep-seated obsessions forged a 'rich kid' into a young man driven to force life into "making sense." Batman's war on crime is a war on the chaos that surrounds us and threatens to swallow

The Batman: "The raw grist of legend."

us whole, whether it's personified as a costumed villain, a corrupt city official, or a penny-ante stickup man named Joe Chill. Maybe that's why the Joker is the perfect archnemesis for the Batman, he is anarchy incarnate, entropy given face and form.

The Batman's dedication to his gravesite vow is unswerving and megalomaniacal, and in the current incarnation of the Dark Knight Detective he seems to have lost the touch of the human that once tempered his austerity. A pity. He's become more like Judge Dredd than the Batman. And while Judge Dredd is totally dedicated to upholding the Law, The Batman's first priority was Justice, and we know they're not always the same thing.

Still, it's good to see that The Batman, regardless of the DC revisionist Universe, is still smart. He solves his crimes not through sheer muscle power or the ability to see through walls, but with his brain. He might not have the exact same origin as he did before, but the Batman still remains The World's Greatest Detective and a man to be reckoned with.

2) THE SPIRIT

In a different mood altogether, we have Will Eisner's brainchild and alter-ego. When you get right down to it, The Spirit was an ex-cop turned private eye. Nothing special, really, except that he wore a domino mask and lived under a cemetery. Granted, several of his adversaries were on the exotic side (The Octopus, P'Gell, Satin Silk) but most of Denny Colt's adventures involved petty crooks and low-life drifters. The Spirit is also far more easy-going than most of his contemporaries, partly because of Eisner's sense of humor and because ... despite the moniker and the mask ... Denny Colt really isn't a vigilante. He's just another gumshoe, like the Continental Op or Phillip Archer. The Spirit is unique amongst the comic book heroes, and all attempts to mimic him have failed, like The Batman, he's an Original.

3) IRON MAN

Marvel's only successful non-powered super-hero is also one of its earliest. Other nonpowered adventurers from the early '60s (Hawkeye, the Black Panther, Ka-Zar, and even Ant Man/Giant Man, if you want to get technical about it) never really made it in books of their own, having to settle for being members in a superteam or the occasional guest-shot in the *FF* or *Spider-Man*. Iron Man, however, struck a responsive chord amongst those early Marvelites and he's remained one of their better known characters despite changes in costume.

The original Iron Man resembled an ambulatory trashcan and served the same function as a walking iron-lung ... its main raison d'etre was to keep Tony Stark from kicking the bucket. The early designs owed a lot to pulp-era science fiction—Iron Man looks a lot like a robot. Whoever hit on the idea of making his armor red and gold and far more streamlined may have saved the character from oblivion. After this major sartorial redesign, Iron Man began to look the part of the Golden Avenger and not like Gort from *The Day The Earth Stood Still*.

A lot of the appeal behind Iron Man is the fact that it's the suit that is "super," not the person inside it. Heroism augmented by the wonders of technology. It doesn't matter if the person in the suit is a millionaire alcoholic industrialist with a bad ticker, a slightly ditzy personal secretary, or an Vietnam vet, the suit will act the same. It's up to the person in the suit whether their actions will be good or evil.

Its interesting to note that, in its own crude way, Iron Man's tales of a technologically-augmented "body-guard" protecting its parent company from international corporate intrigue foreshadowed the science fiction of Gibson, Shirley, Sterling and the rest of the "Cyberpunk" Movement.

The Spirit: "Just another gumshoe."

Iron Man: No matter who wears it, the suit will act the same.

4) BRAINIAC 5

What exactly constitutes a superpower, anyway? The Legion of Super-Heroes has had, at one time or another, members capable of independent flight, superior strength, telepathic prowess, clairvoyance, self-cloning, bouncing, and eating anything that didn't eat them first. But only one member ever joined the Legion on the strength of being Real Smart. And that's Brainiac 5.

In most of the early Legion stories Brainy gets short shrift. Sure, he invented the Time Bubble, the Legion Flight Rings, the Legion force field belts and Computo (well, you can't win 'em all), but he was useless in a fight. Usually he was kept offstage, working feverishly in his laboratory in the Legion Clubhouse, until the last couple of panels, when he'd rush out with his latest invention and use it to defeat the villain of the week. Brainiac 5 was the very model of The Scientist as Super-Hero.

However, comics are not and never shall be a medium that completely trusts the Intellectual. That mistrust, whether recognized by the creators or not, resulted in Brainiac 5's occasional nervous breakdowns. However, I find Brainy's dips into temporary insanity reassuringly human. Brainiac isn't a computer on legs, he's a living being (albeit a green one) and the strain of always being "on" is far more taxing than his superpowered colleagues could imagine. In a world where invulnerability is the rule instead of the exception, Brainiac 5's bouts of madness are seen as an embarrassing weakness. The Legion is so unused to human failings and frailities they're even unwilling to grant him power. Their distrust of the Intellectual can be seen as uneasiness for their own mortality and imperfections.

Brainiac 5's existence as a benevolent force for Good is reassuring in a medium where superior intellect has long been equated with mad scientists out to conquer the world.

5) BLACK WIDOW

Female heroes are rare enough, those without super-powers rarer still. The Black Widow is another of Marvel's earliest characters, and following the early House of Ideas game plan she began her career as a villain. Actually she had more in common with such femme fatales as The Dragon Lady and P'Gell than Dr. Doom or The Red Skull. The Black Widow was a glamorous Soviet espionage agent too humane to dispose of her enemies. We later learned that she was being forced to spy and she was unsympathetic to the Worker's Cause. Over the years the Black Widow mutated from Mata Hari into Emma Peel, dropping the KGB in favor of S.H.I.E.L.D. She still spied for a living, but now it was "okay."

Brainiac 5: Real Smart.

The Black Widow: Strong willed and believable.

The Black Widow has remained a strong-willed, believable character, despite occasional mishandling by insensitive writers. She is a woman with a checkered past, her own strong personal code of ethics regardless of whatever government she's working for, and a strong need for independence. Her cavalier attitude concerning her lovers, past and present, is a good example of her need for independence.

She has a good time and enjoys the affair passionately until her partner either becomes too dependent or jealous, demanding more time and attention than she is willing to part with. Sometimes she can be cruel to the point of sadism, as with the lovestruck Hawkeye. Probably the most telling incident was when she decided to re-enter the life of her former lover, Daredevil, only to find him hopelessly in love with another woman and on the verge of marriage. The Black Widow cold-bloodedly arranged for the break-up of the romance, anticipating Matt Murdock's return to her arms. It didn't work out that way, and it eventually lead to his destruction by Kingpin. We are not used to seeing such callous, single-minded, manipulative behavior from characters we have been conditioned to perceive as "heroes," but it's an all-too-human flaw. The Black Widow still remains the strongest and most intriguing of Marvel's characters, and one by which all other female characters should be measured.

6) SHANG-CHI

The kung-fu craze of the mid-'70s flooded the comics market with a surplus of martial artists. Most of them had a super-powered gimmick of some sort. The Sons of the Tiger had their mystic amulets, White Tiger became a championship black-belt simply by wearing junk jewelry, and Iron Fist had the power of the Dragon's Heart. Only one was a

Master of Kung-Fu. Shang-Chi, son of Fu Manchu and an Anglo mother, was raised from infancy to be a perfect living weapon. It was obvious Fu Manchu had no intentions of teaching the boy to replace him (after all, he wasn't planning on dying), so we must assume he was hoping to produce the ultimate Loyal Assassin: a lackey who would kill on command, without questioning, out of familial respect. Fu Manchu did not reckon with his son possessing a brain of his own and a philosophy molded by the Buddhist monks that raised him rather than by the Devil Doctor.

Shang-Chi's adventures owed more to James Bond and Robert Ludlum than Bruce Lee and David Carradine, which helps to explain his book's continuation long after the other chop-sockey heroes had disappeared. Shang-Chi was an innocent, raised in isolation from the 20th Century West, and his earlier adventures captured the essence of the Naif Amongst Wolves. As Shang-Chi grew older and more sophisticated about the world of espionage and counter-espionage he became embittered and resentful. He had gone from being his father's secret weapon to being MI6's. Considering how long it's taken Nick Fury to suss out that S.H.I.E.L.D. ain't all tea and crumpets, Shang-Chi's personal "rising and advancing" is prodigious.

To my knowledge, Shang-Chi was the first "hero" in comics to kill his own father (Oedipus beat him by a few dozen centuries in the fiction field). The fact that he was forced to use a hand gun (something he always found detestable) to do the job was even worse. But we know—even if Shang didn't—that he'd never be able to lay hands on his father. Shang-Chi's subsequent guilt eventually lead the series to a logical conclusion, with the Master of Kung-Fu forsaking the shadow games of MI6 and the treachery of the Si-Fan by becoming a simple fisherman in Communist China (until his recent re-activation in

Shang-Chi: A "naif among wolves."

the pages of *Marvel Comics Presents*, about which the jury is still out).

Shang-Chi's morals and personal belief systems were as stringent as The Batman's, if a bit preachy and occasionally on the "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Repair" side. Unlike Batman, the Master of Kung-Fu was able to reconcile his guilt and sense of betrayal and find peace of mind outside the roles created for him by his father and Sir Denis Nayland Smith.

7) MISTER MIRACLE

One of the first adventure comic strips to become nationally famous was *Mandrake the Magician*. And the early comic books swarmed with *Mandrake* clones, although most of them were "real" magicians and not just master illusionists. Still, the stage magician as hero has a history in comics almost as long as Superman's. And the greatest of all stage magicians was Harry Houdini, best known today as the grandaddy of all escape artists. Armed with just his wits, an unshakable calm, and a contortionist's skill, Houdini escaped from certain death every night, with matinees on weekends.

Jack Kirby's Mister Miracle is notable in that, despite being surrounded by grotesques and born of "new gods," he is without super-powers of any kind, except for his uncanny ability to escape from tight spots. Although raised on the hell-planet of Apokolips and trained to be a murdering fiend, Scott Free remained untainted by his surroundings and upbringing, remaining an innocent amongst demons. It was his innate sense of justice and desire to be free that led him to escape Darkseid's control, and he accomplished it with only the resources granted him, or any other human, at birth.

Mister Miracle remains an innocent abroad, something his wife is very much aware of. Big Barda is wary of her husband's tendency to help others at his own expense and is highly protective of him. Theirs, in a way, is a reversal of the Typical Super-Hero Marriage; Scott is the one without super-powers while Big Barda is strong enough to move the furniture with one hand. It was rather unexpected for Kirby, who is renowned for his cosmic crusaders with their bulging muscles an jutting jaws, to present us with a slender young man who is just like you and me, except that he still remembers all those tricks from the magic kit he sent away for when he was 12.

8) TARZAN

Now we're talking archetypes! The pulp synthesis of Mowgli, Romulus and Remus, and a host of other feral child myths, Edgar Rice Burroughs' creation personified the Noble Savage of legend. Raised by beasts, Tarzan's inherent superiority lead him to become a lord of both man and apes. Most comic book treatments dwell more on his adventures than his life as Primitive/Victorian Gentleman. The concept that a human being, raised by animals, can possess the best of all possible worlds (incredible strength, stamina, heightened senses, superior intellect, and personal hygiene) is a popular one and has served as the model for countless imitations.

Tarzan dubbed himself the jungle's lord and meted out justice according to "jungle law." Tarzan's moral code ("The strong should protect the weak") was rather enlightened for someone raised by apes, but then he was English.

Like The Batman, Tarzan's actions are inspired by the spirit of justice and not the letter of the law. Being in the heart of the African jungle or some

Mister Miracle: The stage magician as hero.

Tarzan: The pulp synthesis of Mowgli, Romulus & Remus, and a host of others.

time-lost valley, no one was particularly worried about civil rights and due process of law. Being a genuine hero, Tarzan never abused his power over his "subjects" and remained a trusted friend instead of becoming an Afrikaaner.

9) BLACKHAWK

Long before Iron Man put in his first appearance, Blackhawk was showing what a normal red-blooded European boy could do with a good plane and flying by the seat of his pants. Technology enabled Blackhawk to fight the Axis on a level that would have been impossible otherwise. Blackhawk and the newly resurrected Airboy are the last of a once-profligate subspecies of Mystery Man; the flying ace as super-hero. The myth of the dashing aviator-hero dates back to the First World War, and has remained embedded in the American psyche ever since. In the '50s, when commercial airlines took over and flying became more and more commonplace the glamour and adventure shifted to the astronauts who were pushing back the frontiers of space. New, space-age heroes like Adam Strange and the Challengers of the Unknown replaced the likes of Blackhawk, Airboy, Sky Wolf and Balloon Buster. Blackhawk remains the most dashing and romantic of that outmoded breed. Hawkaaaa!

10) RORSCHACH

Some might object to my including a character that was created for a limited-run series along with some of the industry's veteran warhorses. But Rorschach represents a mindset common in comics that needs to be addressed. For 50 years fans have been thrilling to the adventures of costumed heroes, super-powered or not, who butt into other people's business without being asked. Although unauthorized to do so, they investigate murders, break up muggings and apprehend villains with an efficiency seldom seen in the police force. Because they are not restricted by bothersome baggage like the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution, they are free to frighten, bully, beat and torture the information they need out of underworld scum in pursuit of their personal interpretation of "justice." It makes for thrilling reading, but when done in Real Life it's scary as hell. Rorschach is the logical extrapolation of what would happen if masked vigilantes did exist in our society. It's not very thrilling. It *is* chilling.

Rorschach has his origins, fittingly enough, in Charlton Comics' The Question, a Ditko-created sleuth. Like most Ditko inventions, The Question lived in a world of black and white. Those who pretended there were shades of gray were deluded liberals who eventually paid with their miserable lives. Rorschach lives in an amoral, chaotic world. A world on which he tries to force his black and white moral vision, manifested by his "face." Where The Batman is motivated by guilt and rage, Rorschach's prime motativation is hate. Hate for a world that has never shown him a moment's love. Hate for a world that has never given him respect. Rorschach was created as a way to punish the faceless, all-encompassing "Them." They never loved Kovacs. They always laughed at Kovacs. They always made fun of Kovacs. If he could not be loved and respected, then he would make them fear him.

Rorschach's obsessions were those of a paranoid schizophrenic, but on the surface they are no different than the average super-hero. Rorschach wants to impose his morals on society. So does Batman. And Superman. The difference is that they don't get enjoyment out of murdering rapists and breaking the fingers of their informants. Superman and Batman were raised by loving, solid parents. Rorschach's mother was an alcoholic whore who beat and sexually abused him. Rorschach is the super-hero mythology seen through "reality." What kind of mentality and social upbringing would inspire someone to grow up and become Mr. A? Surely not a stable homelife.

Vigilantes are dangerous, deluded people, and far from desirable role models for young children. Hollywood would have us think otherwise, with their handsome macho movie stars rampaging across the screens. But they are not the truth behind the vigilante. Rorschach, with his seething hatred and alienation, is the truth.

I have met several fans who did not like the character at all. When questioned at length, their distate was summed up as "He makes me feel funny." I guess it was hitting too close to home to have the mask pulled off and find, not a hero from legend staring back at you, but some poor, loveless, crazy schmuck. And yet, despite his madness, Rorschach embodied several ideals we normally associate with heroes which were lacking in other, more traditional characters in the cast. Insane as he might be, Rorschach had a code of honor he operated by that he refused to bend under any circumstances. His refusal to compromise doomed him, as he was fully aware. Like the Greek heroes of old, he was destroyed by the gods. ●

Blackhawk: The dashing aviator-hero.

Rorschach: The frightening reality.

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DOC'S BOOKSHELF

The East is Read

by Dwight R. Decker

So you've been entranced by your *Lone Wolf and Cub*, and you've been enthralled by the aerial combat of your *Area 88*, and you've faithfully followed every issue of your *Mai the Psychic Girl*, and you're probably thinking to yourself right about now, "Boy, those folks over in the Far East really know how to put out good comics!"

Well, maybe they do... and then again, maybe what's gotten over here so far has actually been an unrepresentative sampling of their very best work. Is it possible that we just haven't seen what their not-so-hot product is like? And would we really want to?

Japan isn't the only comics powerhouse in the Orient. South Korea and Hong Kong publish comic books, too. And with the recent expansion of the American market, thanks to the rise of direct sales and the proliferation of comics shops across the continent, several Far Eastern publishers have seen what they think is their opportunity to get a piece of it.

Along with the Japanese, the Koreans and Chinese are coming in with several advantages. One is that they have a professional, already published product that has been tested and proven successful in the home markets. Another is professional production and printing that in some respects outdoes the American product.

One serious drawback, however, is that the Far Eastern comics do originate in a different culture, and the jury is still out on whether the American audience will accept some of the odder riffs and themes that Oriental readers are apparently used to. Like martial arts.

For most of us, it's probably enough that when two characters are shown getting into a fight they beat on each other for a while and then one or the other wins and the story gets on with the plot. The fight itself may be exciting, but we don't care that much about the mechanics of it. Well, a few of us might. The *Comics Buyer's Guide* just started a column by a martial arts instructor who apparently intends to gripe and moan whenever comic books get techniques wrong. Me, I take the typical Western viewpoint that while karate or kung fu or chop suey or whatever are all very well, good exercise, and doubtless useful to know in crisis situations, the greatest martial arts master in the world is still no match for Samuel Colt.

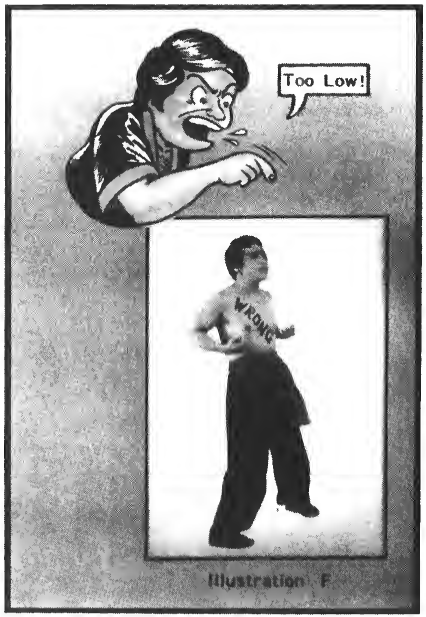
Gee. Looks like he's just gonna sock her, don't it? From *Invincible Four* #1.

But over on the other side of the world they take ther martial arts *very* seriously. Comic-book fight scenes are sometimes choreographed in excruciating detail, with every move painfully described and explained. In many cases, mastery of the martial arts isn't just knowing how to fight well, it's equated with possession of nothing short of miraculous superpowers.

And so we come to an impressively produced slick-paper comic book with the slightly awesome title of *The Invincible Four of Kung Fu & Ninja*, published by Leung's Publications of Hong Kong. Weighing in at the even more awesome price of $2.75 a copy, the English-language edition has recently appeared in American comics shops.

Well, sort of English-language, anyway. This is, after all, "The Only Comic to Teach You *Real* Kung Fu & Ninja Application," as it says on the cover. This issue will "Teach You the Incredible Technique of *Standing on Real Eggs!*" ("However, before you actually start to practice this performance, you must obtain the approval of your mother (or your guardian). Otherwise, be careful that she would not give you money to buy this comics any more!")

The main feature is a 28-page story set in China in the late 1920s. A blonde American girl named Kim and her black companion, Rocky, are walking through a Chinese city and



"Mr. Wrong" shows us how *not* to do Kung Fu in *Invincible Four*

beset by ruffians. Fortunately, a handsome young Chinese fellow named Ting Lung chances on the scuffle and lends a hand to help the Americans. To be honest, there isn't much more plot than that. *Everybody* in the world in this thing knows Kung Fu, so you get panel after panel of excruciatingly meticulous explication of their various moves.

A mild example of an all-too-typical caption: "Kim administers the 'Umbrella Grabbing Technique' of the Flying Phoenix Kung Fu, then follows immediately with a kicking movement, the 'Flying Phoenix Spreading Its Tail,' to counter attack the opponent . . ."

A ninja shows up at the end of the story, and while he seems hostile and about to kill the hero, things are continued next issue and it seems safe to assume the ninja eventually joins the team. Quite a mixed bunch here.

American readers might wince a little at the black member's characterization. Rocky is squat, muscular, and though good-hearted and loyal to his friends, not depicted as overly bright. He mainly enjoys eating, it seems. And while Kim and Ting Lung are identified with nifty styles of Kung Fu (that is, Kim fights Phoenix style and Ting gets to fight Dragon style), what does Rocky get? Turtle style.

On the other hand, it does seem that Rocky has what amounts to superpowers. "The 'Chi-Kung' practiced by Rocky is a kind of miraculous internal power which turns his skins so tough & tensile as to be able to resist attacks by weapons. . . The practice of Chi-Kung is divided into six stages of progressive advancement. Upon reaching the 4th stage, the practitioner could withstand the chopping by sharp weapons. Rocky has already reached this stage." In short, he's virtually invulnerable and hatchets merely break on him.

My knowledge of the martial arts is slim, but I'm willing to grant for the sake of the story that a skilled practitioner can perform all manner of remarkable feats. I do draw the line at blatant magic, however.

Even so, the story is an oddly endearing one. Maybe it's the slightly cracked English translation (as when Rocky yells at his opponents, "Get killed!"), or perhaps it's the pleasantly cartoony art and the uncomplicated, attractive, and angst-free main characters. The comic is not without humor and it seems sincerely done if a little naive.

The back section of the book is where it gets slightly strange. Besides the almost bewildering assortment of contests and merchandise offerings, it becomes obvious that this comic book is mainly promotion for Dr. Leung Ting and his various Kung Fu-related enterprises. (Even the name of the story's hero, Ting Lung, suddenly seems suspiciously similar.) Leung Ting is such a famous martial arts grandmaster and has written so many books and produced so many video tapes (all of which are available for sale), that I feel like I must have been on the moon these past ten or fifteen years because I've never heard of him or his famous "Wing Tsun" style of Kung Fu. There are five pages of photographs illustrating basic Kung Fu moves, though the small print in the indicia includes a disclaimer in which everybody connected with the book "assumes no responsibility for the use or misuse of information on martial-art techniques contained in this periodical."

The book is kind of touching in its apparent eagerness to please (even if it slightly misses the mark), but recommended only if you're willing to tolerate a *lot* of martial arts lecturing.

Then there's the Jademan group of comic books, also out of Hong Kong. If the *Invincible Four* book is characterized by its naive sincerity, the Jademan books are a high-powered, slickly commercial operation, and reportedly account for 80% of the comics sold in Hong Kong. The company's founder and mastermind is one Tony Wong, who has been called the "Stan Lee of the Orient" and the "Walt Disney of the East." The company's advertising seems to promote him personally more than the comics and their heroes, which seems a little misguided; I'm hardly going to be inspired to buy a comic book because its publisher is a friendly guy who built a major publishing empire and now drives a keen sports car, but I might if the characters and storyline interest me.

Jademan made its appearance in the United States this past summer with a sampler called *Jademan Kung Fu Special*, then followed it up with four regular titles, *Oriental Heroes*, *The Force of Buddha's Palm*, *Drunken Fist*, and *The Blood Sword*, all 64 pages and $1.50. The printing is gorgeous and the art generally excellent if anonymous (that is, Tony Wong gets the credit, but these books are team projects, with as many as 20 artists working on a single issue). American writer Mike Baron was called in to clean up the translations and make the dialogue read more smoothly, so he gets script credit. Other than for the occasional jarring American colloquialism in the middle of a story set in China's mythological past, however, you hardly realize he's there.

At least *The Invincible Four* kept the potential power of Kung Fu within some kind of reasonably credible limits. The Jademan titles throw believability straight out the window and go with some of the wildest fantasy ever put on paper.

The Force of Buddha's Palm, for example, takes the idea of martial arts as super-powers straight into the realm of magic, with a hero named Nine Continents, who has mastered techniques like "The First Rays of Buddha's Light," "The Radiance of Buddha's Incense," and even "The Wrath of a Million Buddhas," all of which produce spectacular lighting effects and knock people over and tear things up from a distance. The illustrations of these maneuvers are gorgeous, with what look like airbrushed paintings somehow finely reproduced on pulp comic-book paper, but I seriously doubt if you can go to your friendly neighborhood storefront martial arts parlor and learn these skills. The plot of the story is too involved for easy summarization, but deals with a couple of Kung Fu buddies, one of whom has an illicit romance with a slave girl that results in the birth of twins, much to the annoyance of the slave girl's owners, two sisters with magic powers, who send a band of grotesque assassins out to murder the fleeing lovers . . . and that's just the beginning.

Drunken Fist is in somewhat the same vein, centering on a search for the current incarnation of the living Buddha. Of some interest is one of the villains, a little man with blue skin and a huge, bulbous, knobby head: "The Brain Demon." Otherwise it's another quasi-medieval fantasy with a lot of magic, even more Kung Fu, and a tangled plot with more characters than you can keep track of. *Oriental Heroes* has a contemporary setting with international intrigue in Thailand and piracy on the high seas preying on Vietnamese boat people, but in some ways the story is just as surreal as those in the other comics: the villain of the first issue is a demonic-looking crime lord called "Skeleton Secretary," with the promise of even weirder villains to come in future issues. Finally, the plot of *The Blood Sword* deals with a quest for a magic sword that will cut through steel, and features such a colossal cast of characters and such a magnificently convoluted storyline that one caption even jokes about it, saying there will be a quiz later.

Drunken Fist, from Jademan Comics.

The Jademan line of comics offers a beautifully printed array of comic books, but whether the stories told by the pretty pictures add up to very much is another matter. Even the charmingly primitive characterization of the leads in *The Invincible Four* make the reader care more about what happens to them than anything involving the hundreds of bland cast members running through the four Jademan titles. The stories wind and weave in odd directions, and the amount of introductory exposition necessary just to explain what must be routine Chinese fantasy concepts to the Western reader is tremendous, and in the end simply daunting. The diligent reader who plows through the books will be rewarded by a glimpse at an exotic and unfamiliar culture, and if nothing else, Chinese fantasy cliches are at least different from Western fantasy cliches. But in the end, I suspect few will feel it worth the trouble. Some things just don't translate well from one culture to another, and extravagant Kung Fu fantasy may be one of them.

Then there's Eastern Comics, which has recently released *The Untouchables* as a black-and-white weekly series. First off, someone should have told them that the name of the book was a poor choice in the United States because of Elliot Ness. Most Americans associate the name immediately with the racket-busting flying squad in Chicago, and have forgotten, if they ever knew, that the Untouchables were the lowest caste in India. The original Korean title of the book, *The Alien Baseball Team*, is far better and should have been retained; after all, it's really what the book is about.

The Untouchables is a South Korean baseball comic book, and reportedly that country's top seller. In fact, it's the strip that put comics on the map in Korea. Drawn in a cartoon style similar to the one all over Japanese comics (heavy on the speed and action lines, etc.), it's basically a long-running soap opera about a young man who becomes a Korean baseball star in spite of the odds. As yet, no fantasy elements other than the hero's remarkable but credible ability to throw a ball have turned up, and the story really doesn't need them. By concentrating on its simple but well-told story and human characters, this modest black-and-white comic book far surpasses all the color pyrotechnics of the entire Jademan line.

It also brings up the question of why few sports comic books have ever been done in the United States. A few were attempted in the '40s and '50s, and DC published a title called *Strange Sports Stories* in the early '70s that mixed fantasy and science fiction with sports with dubious results, but none have lasted long. Perhaps the right approach has just never been found. Surely there are more kids out there in the world beyond the traditional

Korea's *Untouchables*, a sports comic that works.

comics market who would rather read about heroic quarterbacks and star pitchers than super-heroes.

"Comics for the People"

All this brings us to a very bad American comic book that at first seems like an utterly ridiculous idea—but may actually be more in tune with what the mass of potential readers really wants than anything currently being done with far greater competence.

It looks like sending my crystal ball back to the shop for a new picture tube improved its reception. Remember back in *Amazing Heroes* #146, when I talked about a young friend of mine who insisted on telling me all about his idea for a TV series about bikers who fight crime? Rather than use the actual name he had come up with for it (creators have some rights, after all), I called it *Glory Hogs*. I also made the not-quite-serious suggestion that he should have set his sights a little lower. Instead of trying to sell *Glory Hogs* as a network TV series, where he had zero chance of accomplishing anything, he should have made a comic book out of it. After all, comic books based on ideas just as lame or worse are published every day.

Even as I was typing, somebody was producing a motorcycle comic book that was *Glory Hogs* come to life. It's called *Harley Rider*, in full-color for $2.00 from Carl Hungness Publishing of Indianapolis, and it's a love-letter to Harley-Davidson motorcycles. It's also one of the most laughably inept attempts at adventure fiction ever published. Whatever my young friend would have done with his crime-fighting bikers in *Glory Hogs*, it couldn't have topped some of the bizarro-biker looneyness of *Harley Rider*.

Consider, for instance, the opening of a strip called "Jezebel Rides Again": "*Jezebel Lee*... legendary girl biker, movie stuntwoman and anti-Vietnam hellion of the flower-power Sixties... *disappeared* almost 20 years ago—some say on a covert mission for a top-secret U.S. agency!" Is it just me, or isn't there some slight problem in consistent characterization with an anti-Vietnam hellion of the flower-power Sixties going on covert missions for top-secret U.S. agencies? But wait a minute—it gets better! What about the handsome young bearded college student who regards Jezebel's grown daughter (a college professor!) as "the pure embodiment of *ideal womanhood*!" He has a secret or two himself: "Few suspect that straight-arrow student and ex-blue collar factory hand Bruce Babcock is actually the feared *Harley pavement prince*!" It's only two pages, ending on a to-be-continued note, but they actually got competent people like Jim Lawrence and Frank Springer to write and draw this silly thing.

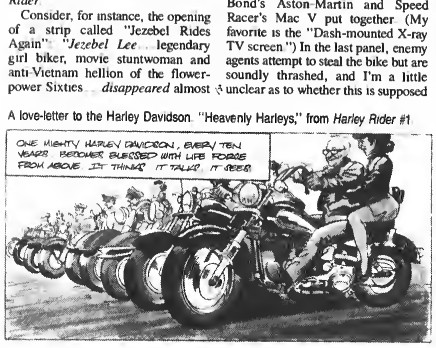
Gray Morrow turned in a history of the Harley-Davidson company that's definitely the best strip in the book. Then it's back to two-wheeled silliness with "Heavenly Harleys," the first in a series of stories about motorcycles that talk to their owners (one of them Malcolm Forbes, the real-life business-magazine publisher and genuinely a motorcycle enthusiast—I wonder if he knows about this). Then there's a two-page poem, illustrated by Bill Overgard, about a band of bikers who catch bank robbers (mainly because the robbers decided to take a break in their getaway after robbing the bank and go fishing).

The last strip in the book is "The Freedom Fighter," an amateurishly drawn and lettered story about a young man who spends his time "keeping to himself, not feeling as good as others," and incidentally working for the CIA designing weapons. One of his inventions is a Harley that has more built-in doo-dads than James Bond's Aston-Martin and Speed Racer's Mac V put together (My favorite is the "Dash-mounted X-ray TV screen.") In the last panel, enemy agents attempt to steal the bike but are soundly thrashed, and I'm a little unclear as to whether this is supposed to be part of the current story or a preview of next issue. If it's the later, they might as well skip the next installment of the series because we already know the foreign agents "attempted to steal Marty's fighter... only to seal their own doom!!" Besides, I think the bit was done better in the movie-within-a-movie in *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*. Still and all, this story left me feeling strangely nostalgic, and it took a moment to pin down exactly why I saw kids in school when I was a lad drawing stuff in their notebooks that looked exactly like this. The appeal of this sort of juvenile-level fantasy to some vast number of our fellow citizens is what we're getting. The emphasis in "The Freedom Fighter" on the hero having such a lousy homelife that "he was ashamed to bring friends home" seems odd to us, but it's a familiar situation for the target audience.

If you read enough Fantagraphics publications, you'll soon notice that some people around the place, particularly over on the *Comics Journal* side of the house, are committed to the idea of comics as an artform. Now, that can lead to a lot of argument about what Art is and what is anybody doing about it, and Lord knows even the Fantagraphics personnel don't necessarily agree among themselves. But one thing that everyone would probably agree on is that a comic book like *Harley Rider* is a long way from being a work of comic art, for that matter, it isn't even competent shlock. And yet... there are a lot of people in the world who would get nothing out of an issue of *Raw* and would be bored to tears by another comic strip in which Harvey Pekar talks about his life—people who would find the genre conventions of even formula mutant and super-hero comics incomprehensible or else too complicated and tiresome to want to bother with. But for these people, *Harley Rider* would express their dreams and aspirations. And there's probably more of them than there are of us.

Marvel's mutant melleridramers, all the legions and leagues of super-heroes, all the various fantasy and science-fiction comic books—they're all written, drawn, published, bought, and read by what amounts to a relatively small and ingrown cult. Whether comic books can even be termed a *mass* medium any longer is open to question. Certainly few if any titles are having any kind of impact on the broader public beyond the limits of the cult. Presumably comic books just don't deliver whatever most Americans would want to read about. Instead, comics fans are just publishing what they themselves like and selling the books to each other ●

A love-letter to the Harley Davidson. "Heavenly Harleys," from *Harley Rider* #1



VIDEO VIEWS

Same Bat-Time, Same Bat-Theatre

by Michael Eury

Ah, the thespian's dream of a lifetime: to be poured into unflattering tights, a cumbersome cape, and an awkward cowl that eliminates peripheral vision, just for the opportunity to breathe cinematic life into one of the greatest legacies of American folklore... *Batman* (or is that *The* Batman?). Imagine, if you will, the sheer, unadulterated *thrill* an actor must feel when portraying the Caped Crusader on the screen. The mere thought of playing that role—of immortalizing Batman for posterity—must send a volcanic shiver of anticipation up the spine of nearly every actor alive. Michael Keaton forfeited his sucessful comedy career, forgetting trivialities like *Mr. Mom*, *Gung Ho*, and *Beetlejuice*, to become a dramatic actor, just to pursue his goal of mesmerizing audiences as The Batman. Adam West, widely known and loved as television's Batman, so coveted his renowned heroic persona that he elected to continue making public appearances as the Darknight Detective long after the show's cancellation, avoiding the allure of a potential co-starring role on *Murder, She Wrote* to do so. And both Robert Lowery and Lewis Wilson, the fortunate duo who each played the Masked Manhunter in the pair of 1940s movie serials, were so devastated that they could no longer "be" Batman after filming ended that neither gentleman chose to ever act professionally again, thus shattering the explosive careers of two Hollywood greats.

Adam West and Burt Ward, eager to deliver another blow to comics' good name.

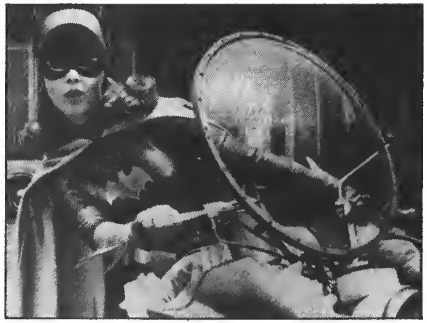
Is Michael Keaton capable of portraying a realistic, *scary* Batman? Maybe. Is the public ready for a major picture starring *The* Batman? Probably not.

It's really sad to think that most comic-book fans expected Hollywood to accept the upcoming Batman movie as anything other than what this column's opening paragraph is: a joke. Sure, I'd thoroughly enjoy seeing a Batman film that brought the gritty, moody essence of the character found in comics to life, just as most of the rabid fanboys who've screamed bloody murder since Keaton signed on for the lead would, but the public—the non-comics reading majority who perceive Batman only in terms of camp humor—would scoff at such a notion. Batman to them is zany fun, bad puns, and Adam West. West was correct, while campaigning for the title role in the new *Batman*, when he stated that the public would not accept another actor in that role.

This, of course, does not reflect the integrity of the legend of The Batman. Rather, it *is* an assessment of the average American consumers, those simple-minded folks, a.k.a. "the public," who have placed *Entertainment Tonight* and *Police Academy* movies on cultural and aesthetic pedestals. To "the public" Freddy Krueger is a role model and Pee-wee Herman is the best candidate for President. Does anyone really expect the mind-dead masses to think of Batman in non-camp terms?

Hollywood producers, however, are not so dumb. They know exactly what "the public" wants: brainless, disposable entertainment. That's why, in *this* day and age, the chances of a "realistic" Batman film are slight.

I just finished reading Joe Desris's well-researched article on *Batman* (not *Batman: The Movie*, incidentally) in the September 23rd edition of the *Comics Buyer's Guide*. While Mr. Desris asserts that *Batman* will be a hard-hitting drama, even quoting *Batman* creator and now-project consultant Bob Kane as saying "This is going to be the definitive, dramatic movie you've been waiting for the last eight years," I still have reservations (*about* the movie, not *for* it). Hollywood is not capable of ignoring what "the public" wants, and, despite all of the good intentions of everyone involved with the film at this time, it's a safe bet that the money-wielding movie moguls will step in and demand more



Yvonne Craig on the Batgirlcycle. We want to see legs!

camp humor in *Batman*. Perhaps one day there *will* be a film made about a comics character that treats its subject matter with dignity, respect, and loyalty to its roots, but I'm betting that *Batman* will not be that film.

IN DEFENSE OF ADAM WEST

Now, wait a sec—don't let that heading mislead you. I've never taken the notion of Adam West playing Batman in the new movie seriously, not only is he too old, but his mere presence would definitely undermine whatever chances of credibility the new film may have. But West's contributions to the Caped Crusader's history cannot—and *should* not—be ignored (nor should Burt Ward's for that matter).

West's tongue-in-cheek portrayal on television helped rocket *Batman* to the top of the ratings in the mid-sixties, thereby making "Batman" a household word and catapulting the sales of comics at that time. The heavy camp element of the show reflected entertainment climes (*Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*, *Green Acres*, et al) in an era that sorely needed escapism. Sadly, though, that camp has left an annoying stigma in the minds of "the public" about super-heroes, one that the comics industry just can't shake; extrapolating from that, it seems ludicrous to even think that Batman, the character who carved that public image, will be the one who remolds it.

While I'm the first to admit that TV's *Batman* has given comic books a perpetual black eye (or at least an unslightly blemish), I can't slight the program for what it was. *Batman* was a marvelously entertaining series that worked successfully on a dual level. Each time I watch one of its episodes today, I roll over from the hilarity and biting satire therein; I'm also reminded of how enthralled I was by the show's frenetic action during my childhood (and, a few years later, by Yvonne "Batgirl" Craig's legs in tights). *Batman* was campy because this war-ravaged nation needed camp to help ease the pain of Vietnam. The show was perfect for its time, and, since it's still highly syndicated today in many television markets, it must be doing something right for audiences in the '80s too.

As I've mentioned in this column before (and will inevitably do again), today's comics-reading audience takes everything *just too seriously*. Somber fanboys, I implore you to momentarily wipe your minds clean of Batman by "Frank" and give Batman by Adam a chance. If you're not engaged by the TV show, then you've forgotten how to smile.

TRACKING THE SCREEN'S BATMEN

Lewis Wilson was the first actor to bring Batman to life in a 1943 Columbia Pictures fifteen-chapter movie serial entitled, to no one's surprise, *Batman*. Co-starring Douglas Croft as Robin, *Batman* chronicled the Dynamic Duo's struggle against the dastardly Dr. Daka (J. Carrol Naish, the great-great-grandson of a Lord Chancellor of Ireland and a veteran of dozens of films from 1930-1964), an Oriental villain who attempted to level America's industrial technology in an effort to aid his native Japan. In this serial, Wilson and Croft were believable as Batman and Robin. Wilson actually looked the part, fitted in what was to date the best Batman movie costume, and Croft's youthful exuberance made him the ideal Boy Wonder.

Six years later, Robert Lowery and Johnny Duncan took the title roles in *The New Adventures of Batman and Robin*, another serial also consisting of fifteen chapters. This entry pitted our heroes against a hooded mastermind called "The Wizard," who caused chaos in Gotham City with a machine that could manipulate machinery by remote control. Unfortunately, Lowery and Duncan's Batman and Robin did not fare as well on the screen as Wilson and Croft's did. Lowery's costume was altered from the one used in *Batman* in 1943; his bat-ears on his cowl resembled points on a court jester's cap, making him look truly ridiculous. Duncan was also too old—and too beefy—to portray a convincingly young sidekick. (Too bad they didn't have a Nightwing in those days.)

[While neither is available in an authorized commercial form, both *Batman* and *The New Adventures of Batman and Robin* can be located on bootleg videocassettes from a variety of sources].

The third actor to play Batman was—you guessed it—Adam West. While none of TV's *Batman* episodes have been issued on videotape, the 1966 full-length Batman movie starring the television cast is for sale for $29.95 from Playhouse Video. This movie, which also pops up frequently on local TV stations, features the combined menace of four of the Caped Crusader's most nefarious foes: The Joker (Cesar Romero), Catwoman (Lee Meriwether), The Riddler (Frank Gorshin), and The Penguin (Burgess Meredith). If you're too young to have seen *Batman* on television, then this movie is an excellent primer to the series, being full of the camp and bat-gimmicks indicative of the Masked Manhunter's prime-time incarnation. And, naturally, the 120 installments of *Batman* live on in syndication.

After the cancellation of the program, West and Ward returned to the roles of Batman and Robin on a number of occasions, excluding public appearances at car shows, shopping centers, and the like: in two NBC TV movies in the late seventies, and as voice actors in the animated *New Adventures of Batman* on CBS in 1977.

And maybe you didn't know that there was *another* pre-Keaton actor who played Batman: Olan Soule, who provided the Caped Crusader's voice for most of the various incarnations of *Super-Friends* TV cartoons, with Casey Kasem as Robin (Holy America's Top Ten, Batman!). [West and Ward eventually did those voices a few years back when the show became *The Super Powers Team*].

So now Michael Keaton inherits the mantle of The Batman. I *am* convinced that he can portray a brooding Darknight Detective; I am *not* convinced that Hollywood will let him do so. We'll just have to wait and see what happens next summer.

NEXT TIME . . .

In *Amazing Heroes* #154, I'll be running the results of the Reader's Poll initiated in #146. Most of the responses thus far have been extremely interesting, so be sure to tune in next month, same Bat-time, same Bat-magazine! ●

Three memorable TV villains, Cesar Romero's Joker, Frank Gorshin's Riddler, and Burgess Meredith's Penguin.

West and Ward provided voices for this cartoon.

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bone-CRUSHING

DELTA TEAM
#8
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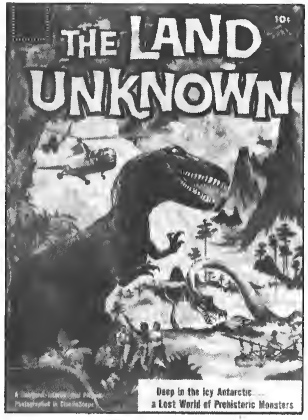
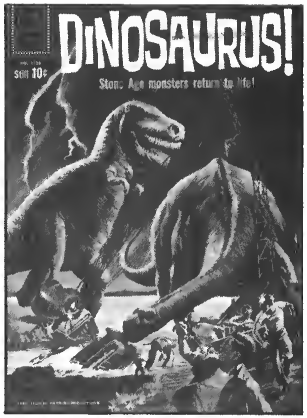
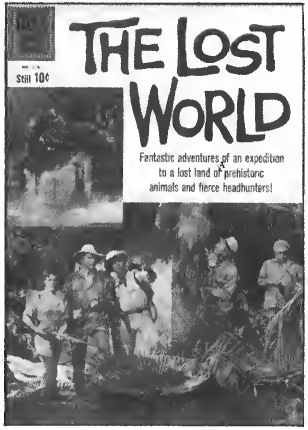
Don Rosa's COVER GALLERY



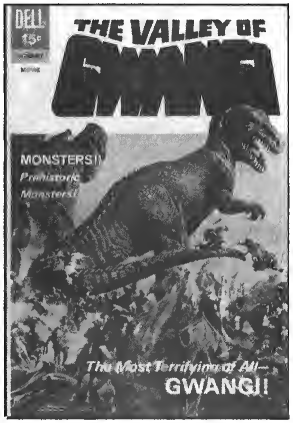


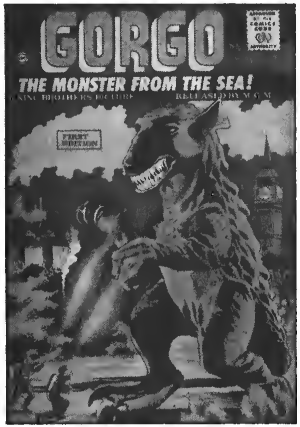


They're hot, they're sexy, they're extinct. Those $40, seven-foot tall blow-up tyrannosauri that infest malls nation wide attest that the adult world has finally learned what kids have known for decades—dinosaurs are the coolest things to hit the planet in the last 100 million years or so.

Comic book publishers and movie producers have also always known that big lizards sell. This issue Don Rosa has provided us with an octet of movie adaptation covers from the '50s, the heyday of the dinosaur flick. Dell appears to have been a leader in the big-lizard comics field, with adaptations of *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (I know, a squid isn't a lizard), and that deathless classic, *The Valley of Gwangi*. But it took Charlton to bring us *Reptilicus* and *Gorgo*. *The Monster from the Sea!* If you don't happen to have 50 bucks for your own inflatable Rex, we hope we've satisfied your craving for prehistoric playmates.

—YE EDS.

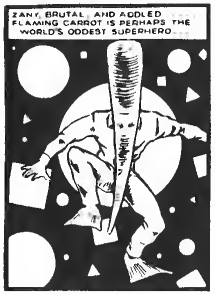




SMALL TALK

Pressing Onward

by Edd Vick



The Flaming Carrot started as small press.

The request to do a column for *Amazing Heroes* on small press comics came as quite a surprise. I had been impressed with Scott McCloud's work on the original "Small Press Watch" (*AH* # 83-98), and saddened when the demands of other work kept him from continuing. But—to be honest—I'd rather have *Zot!*

Then along came Heidi MacDonald with a revamped column (*AH* #139-on) and I thought the field was in good hands. There's no one I'd trust more to review bizarro stuff than Heidi. I'm drawn to her pyrotechnic writing style, and agree with most of her observations and opinions, with one rather large reservation.

Heidi is telling you about work by people like Bob Burden and Pete Bagge. Both, at one time, were involved at least peripherally in the small press (with, respectively, the magazine-sized *Visions* and the tabloid *Comical Funnies*, among other 'zines). Both draw idiosyncratically beautiful books with truly strange storylines; they just aren't what *I'd* call small press books.

What (I hear you ask) do I think of as small press, and who do I think I am to make the distinction? Small press is a lot like the proverbial elephant—its definition depends on which part of it you happen to contact. I'll refrain from adapting Damon Knight's definition of science fiction: "SF is what you happen to be pointing at when you are talking about it."

"Anything goes" is given lip-service in most arts, but comes into its own in small press. If you want to see good guy art (you remember what Bill Ward did with *Torchy*? Same thing, but reverse the sexes), then you have to look no farther than Jabberwocky Graphix' *Dirty Old Lady Digest*. How about a story about a pair of ex-hippies dealing with the Eighties as best they know how? You'll find them in Terry Laban's *Unsupervised Existence*. Where would you look for a strip about Harvey Pekar that—for one—isn't written *by* Pekar? It's in Colin Upton's *Canadian Squalor*. Westerns, detective stories, science fiction and humor all have their place here, as does non-genre work, like Michael R. Neno's artzine *Pictures of Benevolence*.

The breadth of material available in small press far surpasses what you'll see on the stands, due in large part to the importance of creator control. When you're in charge—you write it, you draw it, you publish it, you distribute it—there's no one to tell you something "isn't appropriate" or "won't sell." Some of the books won't appeal to many people beyond the creator, and even the most popular

From *Unsupervised Existence* #2, "Hard Night" by Terry Laban.

From the columnist's own 'zine, *fan'toons*.

may only sell a hundred copies. In a country where the break-even point for an alternative comic is in the thousands, that may seem negligible—and indeed the number of small press mavens is less than five hundred—but their influence is out of proportion to their audience. We would probably not have *Yummy Fur*, *Tales of the Beanworld*, *Ant Boy*, *Ultra Kultz*, *Melody*, *Those Annoying Post Brothers* or two dozen other comics had their respective creators not nurtured their characters in self-published books. Even Timothy Truman's early work appeared in the limited-run *Future Focus* (1978).

The small press would not survive without the availability of an inexpensive means of printing small runs of a title. I have quite a few comic fanzines of the 1960s and 70s, and can certify that hektograph, ditto and mimeograph did not—except when approached with the utmost care and patience—satisfiably reproduce comic art. It's the rare publisher who, like Jabberwocky's Brad W. Foster, can sell enough copies to make offset feasible. As the copying machine (aka Xerox, but they don't like people using their tradename generically) came into wider use in the early '80s, it naturally came to be the medium-of-choice for most small pressers, and I recall 'zines in my possession with print-runs as low as five copies.

Artistic freedom. Limited focus. Low print-runs. All of these characterize small press. There are, though, exceptions in all three cases. So much for generalizations.

As for my own case: I've been publishing 'zines since 1980. At first it was science fiction fanzines, until Brad Foster introduced me to the small press. I started putting out the bimonthly anthology *fan'toons* in 1984, and have printed it and the occasional other title ever since. Early this year three other Seattle small pressers and I debuted *Comics F/X*, a news and reviewzine attempting to cover the entire field. I promise not to talk up my own projects in the future, but felt you ought to know that I do have *some* connection to the small press.

Speaking of promises—I promise in future columns to give full-length reviews, not mere mentions, as I've done above. I was wondering whose work to spotlight in the first set, when Chris sent along a pair of books with Mark Martin's work in them. So be it.

Mentioned in this column:

Canadian Squalor (Colin Upton, 6424 Chester, Vancouver, BC, V5W 3C3, CANADA, 16 pp mini, 75 cents ppd)

Comics F/X (Comics F/X, P.O. Box 95968, Seattle, WA 98145-2968; 28 pp tabloid; $6 for 6 issues [$10.75 first class or overseas])

Dirty Old Lady Digest #s 1-2 (Jabberwocky Graphix, P.O. Box 166255, Irving, TX 75016; 8 and 12 pp minis; 75 cents each ppd; adults only, send age statement)

fan'toons (Edd Vick/Miscellania Unlimited, 5014-D Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105; 32 pp mini; $1.50 ppd)

Pictures of Benevolence #6 (Michael R. Neno, 3200 Indianola Avenue, Apt. D, Columbus, OH 43202; 12 pp mini on cardstock; 75 cents ppd)

Unsupervised Existence #2 (Terry LaBan/Good Grub Graphics, 2102 Dexter, Ann Arbor, MI 48104; 16 pp digest on gray paper with two-color cover; 80 cents ppd)

"Small Press" is a blanket label for comics with small print-runs. Most are photocopied, and in black-and-white on white paper unless otherwise noted. Page count includes covers.

To order any of the above, send a short note including your name, address and a listing of the item(s) you are ordering with payment. Cash is acceptable, but make sure it isn't obvious; tape down any loose change. Please do not attempt to order any of the above through me or from Amazing Heroes.

"Ppd" indicates that no stamps need be included with your order, unless otherwise noted, should be the standard 25-cent variety.

If you self-publish a book that fits into the small press category, feel free to send me a copy for review (although I make no promises about being able to cover it...) at 5014-D Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105. Correspondence about the column should be sent to Amazing Heroes. ●

Tales of the Beanworld also started in the small press.

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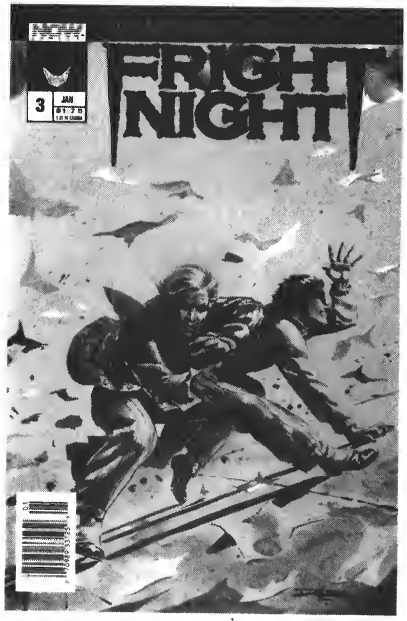

It's the BRAIN-BATS from outer space, and they want to fix there damaged ship! What better workers than bringing back the DEAD?!! How will Charley and Peter handle This kind of UNDEAD??

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RACER-X 4
By Steve Sullivan, Vince Argondezzi, Brian Thomas & Marcus David
Something is up at AZIMUTH CONTROL, and it defiantly is not good!
MONTHLY!!

ASTRO BOY 15
By Ken Steacy & Andrew Pratt
The DINOSAURS have returned from the dead and are creating havoc throughout the world! In this issue ASTRO BOY and ASTRO GIRL discover that it's caused by extraterrestrials!
MONTHLY!!

SPEED RACER 16
By Lamar Waldron, Joe Phillips, John Dell'Olio, & John Vogel
SPEED and TRIXIE pose for photographs for a popular AUTO magazine, and wait 'til you see SPEED's face when the magazine uses the bikini shot of TRIXIE as the centerfold!!! PLUS The RACER family in Africa! Mitch O' Connell cover!!
MONTHLY!!

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS 5
By James Van Hise, John Tobias, Brian Thomas, & Rich Powers
Bank Robbers have a special technique for their success; a WEREWOLF!!??
MONTHLY!!

TERMINATOR 4
By Jack Herman, Thomas Tenney, Jim Brozman, & Rich Powers
On a small island off the coast of Africa their is a tribe that talks about the blacken sky of thirty years before
It's the plasma-rifle against the six foot spear in a most unusual story!
MONTHLY!!

RALPH SNART 4
By Marc Hansen
"My summer of illrepute" in full fabulous color! If you haven't tried this book; start with this one!
MONTHLY!!

FRIGHT NIGHT 3
Jim Van Hise, Lenin Delsol & Katherine Llewellyn
ALL NEW STORY!!!! The Brain-bats from outer space give Peter Vincent and Charley Brewster a major problem with another type of UNDEAD!!!
MONTHLY!!

COMICS in review

JEZEBEL JADE #1

Written by WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS; illustrated by ANDY KUBERT; edited by DIANA SCHUTZ. Published by COMICO

Joe Kubert is one of the undisputed masters of comic art and storytelling. His school of cartooning has trained and brought us many talented artists, not the least of which are his own sons. Adam Kubert is the artist on *Jezebel Jade*, the new three-issue mini-series from Comico, and here he shows that he's learned an incredible amount about comics from his father.

Jezebel Jade is a spin-off from *Jonny Quest*, and Jonny is the one who introduces the story. He and Hadji are cleaning up Race Bannon's room when they chance upon a manuscript he's written. Not realizing it is autobiographical, they launch into reading the story of Race's first encounter with Jade. On a spy mission to Hong Kong to rescue a scientist who may have the secret to eternal life, Race meets the best thief in Japan, Jade, who is disguised as a French double agent.

The book is full of espionage and skullduggery, with more than a few hints of old-time movie serials thrown in for good measure. Scripter William Messner-Loebs manages to work humor and warmth in amongst the triple-crosses and crossfires, no mean feat for any comic scripter. His dialogue is naturalistic, and he manages to portray accents in an easily readable, non-stereotypical manner.

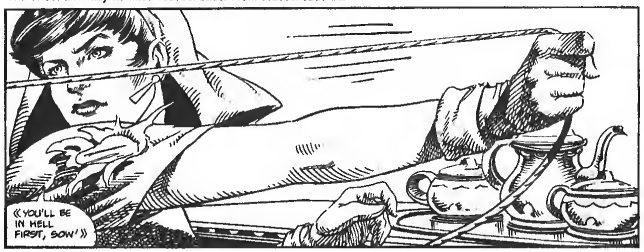
However, two moments seem incongruous in the story. First, Jezebel Jade uses colored contact lenses to disguise herself. The story is set sometime before 1976, and it is my understanding that colored lenses were not able to be worn longer than a very brief period of time prior to a few years ago. This is, for instance, why the actors on the *V* TV show could not keep their cat-eye lenses in for more than a few minutes. Secondly, one of the characters does a double-cross at the end of the story, but absolutely no attention was called to it. I had to reread the pages four times to find out where a certain character had gone before I realized what had happened. This was sloppy, and could have been played much better.

Adam Kubert's art rates nothing but praise. His storytelling is immaculate, his figures are strong and sure, and his inking style no longer looks completely like his dad's. Adam seems to have picked up some inking tips from Gil Kane and Moebius of all people, because the newer style is much stronger than some of his past work. Adam is going to do his father (and comics) proud, as his near beginning work is so strong that it leaps ahead of what most old pros can do. Watch this guy!

Jezebel Jade is an entirely enjoyable espionage comic that works on every level except the two points noted above. While it is nothing revolutionary in comics, it is such solid "good comics" that it should not be ignored.

GRADE: MINT —*Andy Mangels*

The sweet and ladylike Miss Jezebel Jade. From *Jezebel Jade* #1.



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #16

Written and illustrated by MARK MARTIN; edited by KEVIN EASTMAN and PETER LAIRD. Published by MIRAGE STUDIOS

In some past review columns I have made mention of the fact that I don't much care for the *Turtles*, current darlings of the toy world. I, as many others, was initially amused when the first issue of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* was released (although I had not read *Ronin*, the book it was parodying). I was no longer amused by the end of the first three issues, nor when the *Turtles* spawned countless pathetic parodies.

As both a fan, a retailer, and a "critic," I have watched with disbelieving interest as Eastman and Laird's pets continued to spawn, bringing spin-off books (including some hot ones from Solson!), posters, *Cerebus* guest-appearances (not that Lord High Sim would ever pander to the masses or anything), cartoon shows, graphic novels, video-tapes, and action figures!

Despite my lack of enthusiasm about the tiring terrapins, when I became aware that Mark Martin had written and drawn this issue of the

Turtles I had to read it. Mark is the comic genius behind *GnatRat* and *DareRat/Tadpole*, two parody books that worked at a level few other parody books have ever come close to achieving. I've followed Mark's work in other books and cartoons, waiting with bated breath until he would hook me on another hilarious project.

Unfortunately, Mark wasn't able to reel me in this time. His story begins with a rather precocious little girl who takes us back in time with her to thank the Turtles for a deed they have yet to perform. As she leaves, her other self arrives to try and talk the Turtles into changing some elements in time to bring about a different future for her. In doing this deed for her, they unknowingly set up a repeating time loop for the girl.

Martin's story is cute, but it fails to deliver much of a dramatic punch, nor much originality. We've seen this story countless times before (read almost any of Alan Moore's British *Twisted Time* stories); so many times in fact, that the Turtles are able to second-guess the time-loop resolution as much as the readers do.

Martin scores points with his humorously human dialogue—understated or campy, depending on the situation. The little girl is almost too cute, but Martin manages to stay away from Spielbergian schmaltz with her—even though he treads dangerously close. The Turtles are impossible to tell apart (as always), although that is not as important here as in past issues; the girl is the only character we really care about in this story.

Martin's art is a joy to behold, and his facial expressions are priceless. Using duo-shade board, zip-a-tone, and collage, he accomplishes depth, shadowing, and special effects more consistently than most full-color deluxe books do. And wait 'till you see his version of the painting "American Gothic."

Although not as brilliant as most of his previous work, Martin manages to make this issue of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* a pleasant reading experience. Largely because they are not the main characters in the story, you can put aside any prejudices you may have for or against the Turtles themselves, and enjoy a sweet and funny (if too-familiar) story. Hey, there're a lot worse ways you can spend your $1.50.

GRADE: FINE —Andy Mangels

ANT BOY #1 & 2

Written by MATT FEAZELL; illustrated by MATT FEAZELL and DAVE PATTERSON; edited by MATT FEAZELL. Published by STEELDRAGON PRESS

"Take two aspirants and call me in a week." That appeared to be the message I was getting from Chris McCubbin as I looked through the pages of *Ant Boy* #1 and 2. The good doctor's prescription cured my work-needitis, but not my quality deprivation.

Ant Boy is the simplistic creation of Matt Feazell: a nameless boy is orphaned in the wilderness and raised by ants; a "wild child" story so terribly twisted Tarzan's literary father, Edgar Rice Burroughs, is probably turning cartwheels in his grave! The art consists of crude scrawlings and simple lines (Mr. Stickman even makes an appearance at one point!) and the plots are so thin that one wonders why Steeldragon even put this farce to print.

The reason, I think, is because it is a farce. You could not take *Ant Boy* seriously if you wanted to. His adventures are utter nonsense and the drawings so bad they can be classified as disgraceful. There are spelling errors in print and the language is often redundant. Yet *Ant Boy*'s charm is that of innocence and it is portrayed effortlessly. His goals are simplistic, reflecting that of his comic: entertainment.

And entertaining his book is. Spontaneous laughter while reading a comic book for me is a rarity (almost everything has been done), but I did so when reading the epic clash between Ant Boy and the Lawnmower in #2. The reason is that Ant Boy is—in art at least—a spoof on superheroes. That's why the language is so cliched ("jaws of death," etc.). If I have my choice of super-hero spoofs, however, I'll take Don Martin's *Captain Klutz* any day. Still, Feazell is earnestly trying to break into the comics business, and I think this farce is a sincere effort on his part. For that, at the most, I have to give him credit.

But make no mistake. *Ant Boy* is junk! But it's amusing junk. *Ant Boy*'s worth an issue for amusement's and collector's sake, but nothing more than that. It's not that good.

GRADE: GOOD —Lawrence Burdick

MIRACLE SQUAD #1

Written by JOHN WOOLEY; illustrated by TERRY TIDWELL and GARY DUMM; edited by HILARY HUGHES. Published by APPLE COMICS

This four-issue series is apparently a follow-up to another four-issue series from Upshot Graphics—a series that I did not read. Although there is no capsule introduction to the series, the basic setup is seemingly clear to the new reader. The series is set in 1938, with the focus being on Miracle Pictures, a maker of B-movie adventure flicks and located in Hollywood. (Where else?) The "Squad" is composed of people who work at the Studio, though it would appear to be a rather loosely organized group, as the only "members" involved in this adventure are studio owner Mark Barron and studio detective Robert Leslie, along with cowboy movie star Dake Bennet (who is not depicted as a "member" in the "group portrait" on the inside front cover).

After opening with a nicely-done scene in which stuntman Johnny Rice has difficulty escaping from a "death trap" during the filming of a movie, the story moves to the main action as Bennett and his Sioux City Swingers go on the road to promote their latest release, "Skull Valley Riders," which is presumably in the "singing cowboy" tradition. While visiting his home town of Tanapah, Oklahoma, Bennett finds that his father is inexplicably absent from the family farm—along with all of the livestock and everything from the farmhouse. Naturally suspicious, he calls in Barron, who equally naturally selects Leslie to accompany him.

It quickly comes to light that Walton Oil has been doing exploratory drilling in the area and "runnin' sharecroppers off" the land. When confronted, company owner Mrs. Walton claims that she purchased the farm from Bennett's father who subsequently left in search of greener pastures. But Bennett is understandably suspicious and a scheme is concocted to draw out the perpetrators—and so it does, as the issue ends with a struggle and a cliff-hanger predicament.

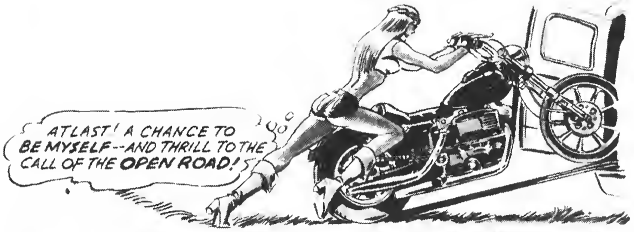
The chief drawback of the Issue is that it is quite apparent early on just who is responsible for the disappearance of Bennett's father. In fact, I was a bit surprised at the cliff-hanger ending (which is a good point, I suppose) since I thought that things would be wrapped up rather neatly and quickly. Maybe better twists ad turns are in store for future issues—and maybe we'll see other members of the Squad.

The characters are rather agreeably portrayed and seem very natural. The most effectve portrait is of Leslie, who grouses about having to spend time with "dirty Okies" yet makes the uncalled-for gesture of giving one of them $5 for "information" (even though Leslie learned nothing useful from him) to help the destitute man out a bit. Writer Wooley demonstrates a nice touch with several quietly amusing moments and penciller Tidwell throws in some revealing and, again, amusing tidbits.

Overall, I might liken this issue to a quiet walk in the country: Agreeable and enjoyable but without much urgency or excitement to it. The story certainly has its moments, but as an adventure or a mystery, it does not keep you on the edge of your seat in anticipation or inquiry.

GRADE: VERY GOOD —T.M. Maple

Got an *Ant Boy* infestation in your kitchen? Try this



Important rule: never take a woman named Jezebel home to meet mom. "Jezebel rides again," from *Harley Rider* #1.

HARLEY RIDER #1

Written by CARL HUNGNESS and JIM LAWRENCE; illustrated by VARIOUS. Published by CARL HUNGNESS PUBLISHING

As you may have guessed, this book concerns itself with motorcycles. Not just *any* motorcycles, mind you, but Harley-Davidson's, to the exclusion of all else. And you may also have guessed that since the Harley-Davidson people are listed above as the co-publishers of the book, it wouldn't amount to much aside from a $2-an-issue commercial for their company.

Much of the credit (or blame) for this book belongs to Carl Hungness, the man who not only co-publishes the thing with H-D, but also writes most of the stories within it. Hungness appears to be a man who loves his bike, and while there's nothing wrong with that per se, it becomes rather annoying when it's all you can find to talk about, as seems to be the case here. Have you ever tried spending 15 minutes or so extolling the virtues of your favorite comic to a friend or relative that doesn't read comics? If so, you probably got the Universal Non-Comics Reader Reaction, which is, "That's great, *for you*, but it's not what I'm into, so please don't bore me with it." Such is the reaction that *Harley Rider* #1 engenders in me.

The simple fact of the matter is that quite a few comics fans are not all that interested in motorcycles, whether they be H-D's or anyone else's. There's nothing wrong with that, any more than there's anything wrong with biker fans having little or no interest in comics: it's just a matter of personal preference. The only thing is, I would question Hungness's judgment as to the size of his potential audience. How many biker fans does he expect will head for a comic shop for this book, regardless of how many well-known Harleys are in it? And how many comics fans does he think will fork over $2 for each issue when the stories amount to little more than pro-biker propaganda?

To be fair, the work within the book isn't all that bad. Hungness may have a bigger-than-normal fixation with his bikes, but most of the stories in the book do seem to hold up fairly well. And while only two of the book's several artists have appeared in print before (Frank Springer and Gray Morrow) the artwork also manages to be quite adequate. It's entirely possible that if Hungness could widen the focus of his efforts a tad more, he might actually have something of interest to the mainstream comics audience.

As it stands, however, the book just doesn't work for me. By concentrating all his efforts on hawking H-D's, and trying to build up their worth in the eyes of all us non-bikers, Hungness really only succeeds in being tedious. Hungness may truly believe that H-D's are the best bike in the world, and he's certainly entitled to his opinion, but I don't want it rammed down by throat. It smacks too much of the *Marvel Age* style of self-promotion for me to really enjoy it.

I can't let the review end without mentioning the lone story credited to writer Jim Lawrence, a two-page opus about Jezebel, a female biker with a dual identity. Lawrence may wish I had chosen to ignore him. I found his story one of the weakest of the lot, with a premise founded on equal parts the origin of Wonder Woman and male chauvinism. Most of the other heroines in comics have outgrown the kind of stereotype Lawrence portrayed here, yet apparently this news has escaped him. I suspect Lawrence was trying for a "Golden Age" feel, when such obsolete thinking and stiff, awkward-sounding dialogue abounded, if so, he succeeded too well.

In total, the book gave me the impression that it was produced by people that don't really read a lot of comics, who have a somewhat skewed view of what comics are currently like and tried to model theirs accordingly. No doubt Hungness and his cohorts

will be embarrassed by the reaction the book will have among comic fans, a reaction I'm sure will be negative. The book was a chore for me to read through, as a little voice in the back of my mind kept saying, "You KNOW you're never going to buy another issue by THIS time! Stop NOW!" But I kept on going until the bitter end, due to that same morbid curiosity that compels us to slow down as we pass an auto wreck, or to smell the milk even after we know it's gone sour. And afterwards, we all wonder why we did it.

If you're a biking enthusiast, or just overly curious like me, then you might feel you want to check out *Harley Rider*. If not, then I'd advise you not to bother with this one.

GRADE: POOR —David Peattie

GREY #1

Written and illustrated by YOSHIHISA TAGAMI. Published by VIZ COMICS

Reviewing *Grey* is quite possibly the hardest task ever presented me. The nearest parallel I can draw would be to review the first six minutes of any given motion picture. As impossible the task may seem, I shall try.

As far as I can tell, *Grey* is set in our future, a future where the caste system starts with "people" and rises to "citizens." The class denoted "citizen" being roughly equal to our everyday standard of living. One rises up in class through credits attained by killing a so far undefined enemy. *Grey* himself seems to be a cocksure Sean Penn type: quick to anger, yet we know he has a heart in there somewhere.

It all gets no more specific than that. I read this translated manga *twice*, and I'm still not sure what's going on. There is, however, an unintentionally humorous introduction from the indefatigable Harlan Ellison. Good old Harlan pays the title brief lip service, then goes on to tell us what an innovative juggernaut of talent *he* is.

Artwise, *Grey* is tops. Artist/writer Yoshihisa Tagami is a first rate illustrator. While his layouts can be somewhat unclear at times, he has a wonderful sense of design and a confident yet delicate use of line.

On the whole, it'll take another issue or two to accurately judge this baby. Faults aside, it shows promise.

GRADE: FINE —John Wilcox

CORUM: THE BULL AND THE SPEAR #1

Adapted by MARK SHAINBLUM; illustrated by JILL THOMPSON; edited by LAUREL FITCH. Published by FIRST COMICS

This is the first time I have read anything adapted from or by Michael Moorcock, and I'm kind of surprised. Having flipped through (or read reviews of) *Elric*, *Corum*, and *Hawkmoon* in the past, it didn't look like much more than slightly romanticized fantasy sword & sorcery stuff. If this issue is any indication, *Corum* is actually highly romanticized fantasy sword & sorcery stuff.

The reader is thrown immediately into Corum's life (apparently following events from the last series), and the trip is a dizzying and disorienting one which is further complicated by the use of names nobody can hope to pronounce (Corum Llaw Eraint, Lwym-An-Esh, Fhoi Myore, etc.). Brought through time by a druid king, Corum is drafted to help save the king's people from the evil Fhoi Myore giants. Meanwhile, Corum unwillingly finds himself falling in love with the king's daughter, Medhbh.

Having not read the original story, I cannot judge how well Mark Shainblum has adapted Moorcock, but he scripts well. The book is mainly talking heads, with pages and pages of nothing but characters interacting or Corum brooding. Shainblum's scripting is hampered by all of the other-worldly names he must use—even though I do not read aloud, my mind would catch and try to pronounce each of them, thus gravely interrupting the flow of the story.

Jill Thompson's art looks better here than it has anywhere else, leaving her *Elementals* work far behind in the dust. She has a lightness and delicacy to her art that works with this story. Where it doesn't work well is the fight scenes, which she seems not as ready to draw. Jill needs to work on her line weights however, as almost every ink line has the same thickness (or thinness as the case is).

Although nothing worth writing home about, *Corum* is a professional book with occasionally striking art (otherwise it's just nice art). If fantasy sword & sorcery are your bag—and you don't demand much of the "sword" in that mix, give *Corum* a try.

But how do you pronounce a Medhbh?

GRADE: VERY FINE —Andy Mangels

People with funny names talk to each other in *Corum* #1.

FOX COMICS #20

Written and illustrated by VARIOUS; edited by DAVID VODICKA. Published by FOX COMICS

Y'know, it recently occurred to me that even though *Amazing Heroes* has listed *Fox Comics* in its Preview Special for over a year now, no one's ever reviewed it for them before. Now, at last, I have a chance to correct that oversight.

I suspect one of the reasons why *Fox* has never graced the Comics In Review section until now is because it's so hard to find here in the USA. None of my local dealers carry it at all. This is one of the great Catch-22's of comics today: the retailers and distributors don't order it because there's no demand, and there's no demand because no one's tried it. This leaves it to me to tell everyone just what they're missing.

Fox Comics is an anthology book in the same general vein as Fantagraphics' own *Prime Cuts*. I know that, because they tell us so on the inside front cover. Yet I would be remiss in my duties if I didn't point out that *Fox Comics* is a vastly different book than *Prime Cuts* in many respects. For one thing, the stories in *Fox* all make sense.

I don't want it to sound like I'm doing a hatchet job on Fantagraphics and their books (especially since I doubt I'd last too long in this job) and the purpose of this review isn't to critique *Prime Cuts* anyway. But in comparing *PC* to *Fox* I was amazed at how little I could follow in *Prime Cuts*. I had trouble understanding nearly every story in *PC #1*, I had no such trouble with *Fox*.

Of course, the fact that all of the stories made sense isn't the only thing to recommend *Fox* to anyone. I know a lot of other comics where you can follow the stories quite well and I detested them anyway. *Fox* also has quality going for it.

Since #20 is the only issue I've ever seen, I can't say for certain that every issue was as delightful as I found this one, but if the talented Aussies that worked on this issue are present every time, I can't see how they could miss. particular stand-outs were David Bird and Tony Thorne's "Return of the Hunter," Dobelsky and Eddy's "Lifestyles of the Poor and Insignificant," and the three page strips by Britain's Eddie Campbell, best known for his *Deadface* and *Bacchus* books for Harrier Comics.

Sadly, the limited space these reviews get keeps me from doing an in-depth look at each item in *Fox Comics #20*. I wish I could, because each one was marvelous in its own way, and they certainly all deserve to be praised. But I'm afraid I'll have to settle for telling everyone that if you like the dry, British sense of humor you find in Harrier and others, you owe it to yourself to demand that your retailers carry *Fox Comics*.

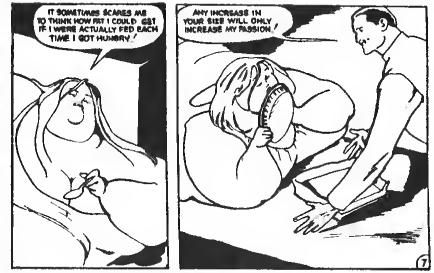
GRADE: VERY GOOD —David Peattie

RENEGADE ROMANCE #2

Written by VARIOUS; illustrated by VARIOUS. Published by RENEGADE PRESS

Although touted as a modern-day, "grown-up" version of the old romance comics, *Renegade Romance* is less that than a showcase where some of the finest artists and storytellers in the industry do sensitive, adult stories with a common theme of human relationships.

This issue leads off with a seemingly-autobiographical story written by publisher Deni Loubert herself and illustrated by Steve Leialoha. The story is not exceptional, but does manage to be genuinely moving, and Leialoha's art is, as always, excellent.



There's someone for everyone. "Midnite Snack" from *Renegade Romance #2*.

Next up is "Eugene," by Colleen Doran, a lovely bit of costumed fluff. We can forgive Doran the vacuous plot, because the story is a perfect setting for Doran's patented pretty-people art style.

"Red Love," by Trina Robbins, was, for me, the issue's biggest disappointment. Although Robbins's art is always a delight, this whiny, sordid, and colorless story (adapted from a Russian novel) does nothing and goes nowhere. This story is yet another example of how Robbins lets her pretentions of significance undermine her very real storytelling gift.

I enjoyed Ned Sonntag's "Midnite Snack" immensely (pun intended). This story about an unnaturally obese woman who finds true love with a distinctly kinky fat-farm orderly is told with a nasty deadpan sense of humor which forcefully drives home its satirical point about how, in spite of our cultural prejudices, beauty still remains in the eye of the beholder.

"Daydreams," by Jackie Estrada and Barb Rausch, is the closest to a grown-up version of the classic comic book romance story. It also represents the most effective and expressive art I've yet seen from Rausch, who I never thought of as an Artist to Watch until I saw this story.

"True Romance," by Dave Hine, also plays hommage to the old romance books in a completely different way. The story follows a '60s romance comic through the hands of several contemporary couples, contrasting the simple romanticism of the old comic with the labyrantine complexities of relationships in the '80s.

The issue ends with "Wedding Day," a small sentimental masterpiece from Bob Rozakis and Stephen DeStephano. This almost wordless story begins at a wedding. The various Wedding Vows are illustrated with vignettes from the lives of the married couples attending the wedding. This short story combines humor and pathos to create an almost perfect example of the art of visual storytelling. Both my wife and I had tears in our eyes when we finished the story. "Wedding Day" alone is more than worth the price of this 64 page book.

The issue also has short autobiographical pieces by Lee Binswanger and Larry Kamp, both of which are quite nice, and a Jaime Hernandez cover which *Love and Rockets* fans will recognize as a splash-page from an early issue of that title.

In all, *Renegade Romance* cannot be too highly recommended to anyone who's at least as interested in the art of comics storytelling as in the various adventure genres currently popular.

GRADE: MINT —Chris McCubbin

PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #2

Written by CARL POTTS; illustrated by JIM LEE; edited by DON DALEY. Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Just in case you hadn't heard, they're filming a *Punisher* movie starring Dolph Lungren right now in Australia. No, I'm not kidding. Don't know whether Dolphy died his hair blue or not, though.

So, this is a spin-off book from the top-selling *Punisher* series, made especially for the crowd who can't get enough senseless violence from Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Starlin's *Batman*, or any of the 16 *Wolverine* titles. I don't see where so much of the appeal for these types of stories comes from, except maybe

on an entirely visceral level. Not only are they visceral, but they are numbingly simple morality plays which anyone, including (and especially) violence-prone morons can understand.

The story begins in Central Park, where the Punisher is commemorating the anniversary of his family's death (a la Batman's Crime Alley). He meets a young revenge-ridden boy out to kill a soon-to-be ex-cop who may or may not have caused the death of his father and the Punisher's family. Of course, the Punisher decides that "I've got to keep him off the path I walk," a phrase left off Kevin Dooley's over-used phrase list from *AH #149*. From there we have several fight scenes, a few assorted killings, a useless and confusing subplot thrown in, and an even more useless guest-appearance by Daredevil (heralded twice on the cover, it amounts to little more than Daredevil popping in to see what the Punisher's doing in New York).

Carl Potts's script is a little wordy for the simplistic tough-guy story he's aiming for, and some of the words he uses may have a few too many syllables for much of his intended audience. The story is standard fare without one single new idea or scene in it; it is a cannibalization of many, many tough-guy stories and super-hero comics.

Potts also has an annoying need to swear, although he can't actually say the words. Although this is far from new, Potts does it so often it becomes almost humorous. If you've ever heard the censored radio version of "The Rodeo Song," you get the idea what reading this comic is like. Within three panels, Potts has one character say: "Who the ,*#% are you?, "What the #*,% are you talking about?", and "You got it ass-backwards, boy." Kinda makes you long for a trucker to translate for you, doesn't it?

The artwork by Potts and Jim Lee is extremely well-done. Lee seems to have picked up pencilling tips from Michael Golden and Paul Smith, even though his inking style is often much too heavy. His figures are wonderful and his attention to detail is impeccable. The main place Lee needs to improve (besides his heavy inking) is in his story-telling, the majority of which is stiff and/or non-imaginative.

What bothers me most about *Punisher War Journal* and its ilk is its glorification of weaponry and violence. This issue there's even a full-page pin-up of one of the Punisher's new guns, with rundowns on what kind of ammo it uses, how effective its shots are, etc. Almost a full page is devoted (early on in the story) to a new knife the Punisher carries, carefully showing how it works. It is at times like this when I can feel the ghost of Wertham coiling in the corner to attack again, and I almost want to join in.

Is it healthy to give children what can be construed as weapon training manuals? When I see kids (under 12) in my comic store carrying nunchaku or sharp metal throwing stars, I fear for their friends. I seriously doubt any argument could be forstalled that these kids would not have learned about and glorified these weapons if they hadn't seen them on *G.I. Joe* or *Rambo* or in any one of a billion Ninja comics on the market. And now we have the *Punisher War Journal* teaching us all how to work ballistic knives and other weapons that can be bought (through surrogates if need be) at many Army surplus or survivalist stores.

Despite the moral (or amoral) implications behind such books as *Punisher War Journal*, this book should really only be bought for the art. There's nada in the story worth reading, the coloring is oppressively over-powering, and the book has too few story pages for its price. Jim Lee is an artist to watch, but don't bother reading the stories he draws here. Who needs the title character? Reading this book is a punishment.

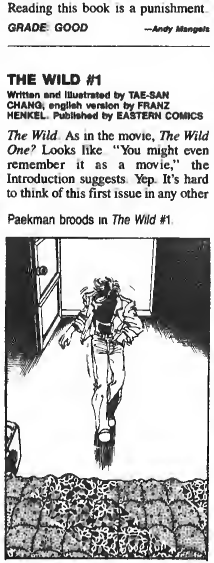
GRADE: GOOD —*Andy Mangels*

THE WILD #1

Written and illustrated by TAE-SAN CHANG; english version by FRANZ HENKEL. Published by EASTERN COMICS

The Wild. As in the movie, *The Wild One?* Looks like. "You might even remember it as a movie," the Introduction suggests. Yep. It's hard to think of this first issue in any other terms. What's it about? Two guys. They've just gotten out of prison after eight months. What were they in for? Dunno. They promise to keep in touch. Each goes home, wondering what he'll find. Cartoon characters against a wintry modern Korean landscape. Haesu is nervously frantic to see his girl friend, Sunim, hoping that she's still waiting for him. Paekman is brooding; we're not let into his thoughts yet. "You've got to be attentive to this story," the Introduction says. Yeah. It's a 32-page mood piece. No action. Lots of atmosphere. Deliberately cryptic so far. Nicely done for what's here, though. Could have possibilities. Give the next issue a try? Yeah.

Paekman broods in *The Wild #1*.



GRADE: VERY GOOD —*Frederick Patton*

THE MUNDANE ADVENTURES OF DISHMAN #1

Written and illustrated by JOHN MACLEOD. Published by ECLIPSE COMICS

As far as I can tell from the advance photocopy of this comic book that I received, it is a straight reprint of the first six issues of John MacLeod's self-published mini-comic of the same name. Each "chapter" in this reprint volume consists of the cover from the mini-comic plus seven pages of story. The print run for the mini-comic version is given at the end of each chapter and it appears to be quite healthy (well in excess of 1,000 copies), to say the least. However, this edition from Eclipse should reach a wider audience—and that's good, because *Dishman* deserves wider recognition.

Paul Mahler is just an ordinary high school teacher who happens to own a set of the prized Fiestaware dishes. Unbeknownst to him (though this is a fact that has appeared in the media), these dishes are radioactive. But this is comics, folks, so instead of causing some debilatating disease, this radioactivity confers an amazing power upon Mr. Mahler: the ability to clean (and stack and store away!) dirty dishes with the wave of his hands! Okay, so it's not one of the greater super-powers on record but it *is* a super-power, and since he has been reading comic books for the past 25 years, Mahler knows that "with great power comes great responsibility." Thus, he does what he feels he must do. Yes, he becomes a super-hero, with the inspiring name of Dishman!

This sets the stage for those mundane adventures. His fiancee (who was with him when he discovered his power) tells "Just one person" and soon the high school is abuzz with rumors of Mahler's "magic." He has difficulty getting his costume made and ends up having to pay big bucks to a professional tailor for it. Then he has trouble trying to squirm into the costume and eventually finds out the facts of costumed life. For instance, he can't stand wearing his costume under his street clothes and the lack of pockets for such things as keys and bus fare is a definite drawback. When he finally gets out "on patrol" he meets general disbelief from the urban populace—peppered with not a few calls of "Faggot!"

However, Mahler does not view his super-hero career as fun and games. Though he knows his power is unusual and seemingly not very useful, he is deeply committed to the belief that he must do what he can to fight crime (yes, *fight crime*) and help people. Thus, he finds himself in a laughable yet poignant situation. Even he can see the absurd aspects of his new status, yet he still feels he can do genuine good in the world. These conflicting sentiments, combined with the reactions of the people around him and the everyday obstacles involved in costumed crimefighting, constitute the principal appeal of this comic.

MacLeod shows many fine comedic touches (one small example: Mahler's fiance is named Joy) and displays a good storytelling sense. Awkward situations are played very deadpan and become all the more amusing (and sometimes touching) for it. His art is generally crisp and serviceable. The covers (Dishman shaving, Dishman at the supermarket) often seem completely divorced from the story inside, but that is a minor quibble.

Dishman may not be everyone's cup of tea (Ouch! Sorry) but it is an engaging entry in the "real life super-hero" category.

GRADE: FINE —*T.M. Maple*

TEAM YANKEE #1 & 2

Written by DAVID DRAKE; based on the novel by HAROLD COYLE; illustrated by ROD WHIGHAM. Published by FIRST COMICS

Will the Soviets ever invade Western Europe? The whole structure of NATO is based on that possibility, even though some people think it an extremely remote one. (The Soviets have enough trouble controlling *Eastern* Europe. Why would they want to double their trouble?) Still, history is full of unexpected and strange events and you just never know....

Team Yankee is about World War III. It is told completely from the point of view of soldiers in (or near) the actual battlefield, so we don't get any of the geopolitical why's and wherefores of the war. We just get the war. If this is, from one perspective at least, a weakness of the series, it is also very definitely one of its main strengths. This narrow focus provides a driving force and an intensity to the proceedings. And though no one can know what an all-out modern "conventional" war will be like unless and until it actually happens, it all seems very real.

War is still hell in *Team Yankee #1*.

At the start, the soldiers are in position but still feel that it just can't happen. But it does. The Soviets invade and the men and machines of the US Army (and, more specifically, of Team Yankee—a unit in that army and the focus of the series, naturally) are tested. There are successes and failures, wins and losses, survival and death.

The reader is drawn into the lives of the soldiers very effectively. It is war at the level of the fighting soldier and his immediate commanders. What orders and factors (and rumors) filter down from on high are seen only in the light of their impact on the immediate situation. (Sometimes the US Army Command seems almost as much of an irritant to the soldiers as the Soviet Army.) The confusion and uncertainty of the battlefield is driven home. ("Were those *our* planes?!") The cold military jargon and airwave chatter contrasts starkly with the bloody reality of combat.

Though the course of the war (as it concerns Team Yankee, at least) is a major focus of the series, there is also a large cast of characters. Some we see only briefly, either because they are only peripherally concerned with the main action or because they are killed or wounded. Others play a larger role. None are drawn in depth in the first two issues. Also seen, unfortunately, is at least the possibility of descent into the cliches of military fiction. For instance, we have Lt. Garger, the "muck up" who shows signs of coming through when the going gets tough, and Capt. Bannon, the good officer who rebels against the pig-headedness of rear echelon officers. Future issues will tell if my fears on this count are realized or not.

A minor complaint (though it can be quite irritating) is that much of the aforementioned military jargon can be confusing to the unitiated—so much so that it tends to disrupt the story's flow. A glossary of some of these terms (ITV, FIST, BMP, Dragon, Sabot, LAW, etc., etc.) would be a welcome addition.

Team Yankee provides a look at the nightmare on a non-nuclear (so far, at least) super-power conflict and does a good job of making it involving and suspenseful without glorifying it.

GRADE: VERY FINE —*T.M. Maple*

NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND #1

Written and illustrated by HAYAO MIYAZAKI; translated by DAVID LEWIS and TOREN SMITH; English version edited by ABRA GREENSPAN. Published by VIZ COMICS

Between the current delight in most things Japanese and the similar delight in post-holocaust tales, *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* seems to have sufficient elements to be a success in North America.

The book is set in a post-holocaust world where pocket kingdoms exist between large areas of contaminated land. The time is a thousand years after the world was nearly destroyed in the Seven Days of Fire (which occur about 200 or 300 years from now). Toxic Jungles cover much of the planet and spew forth deadly spores that must be destroyed before they can take hold and spread the contamination. There are many nasty forms of animal life as well, including land grubs and the large insects called ohmus (which, it turns out, are intelligent).

Nausicaa is a princess in the Valley of the Wind, and is rapidly becoming the leader of her people since her father is exceedingly old and not terribly healthy.

This first issue deals with her assuming leadership of her father's armed forces in order to prepare for war. During this time, she encounters an airship of refugee women and children from neighboring Pejitei. Despite her efforts, the refugee ship crashes. The Pejitei chieftain's daughter, who is one of the refugees, tells Nausicaa of an unprovoked attack by the Imperial Guard of the Vei Emperor of Torumekia. She gives Nausicaa a curious, egg-like object and makes her promise never to let

it fall into the Emperor's hands. From there it is only a matter of time before the Imperial Guard attempt to invade the Valley of the Wind.

This is a real roller-coaster ride. Hayao Miyazaki has set up an intelligent, well-conceived variation on a number of themes with this book.

We have a post-holocaust world; feudal kingdoms constantly bickering within the vague confines of a larger empire; a coming-of-age story of a warrior-princess; intelligent insect life and much more.

The thing is, it is done so beautifully that all the elements combine to make a thoroughly readable, highly entertaining package.

While the art does not utilize some of the effects found in *Lone Wolf and Cub*, nor the broad Japanimation strokes of the *Robotech* books, it more than makes up for it with simple layouts and deceptively sophisticated linework.

The English translation reads naturally and moves well.

If there is any complaint at this end, it is that the dialogue between Miyazaki and Moebius which is mentioned on the title page of the test print I received is neither included in the test print or the advance photocopy I received. I expect it will be most interesting.

Fortunately, the test print included a Moebius Poster mentioned on the cover. It is a lovely portrait of Nausicaa, and greatly enhances the opening issue of the series.

I recommend this book to all intelligent comics readers.

GRADE: MINT —Sheldon Wiebe

ARGONAUTS #1,

Written by BILL SPANGLER; illustrated by PATRICK OLIFFE; edited by CHRIS ULM. Published by ETERNITY COMICS

BUSHIDO #1

Written by BRUCE BALFOUR; illustrated by BEN DUNN and LEA HERNANDEZ; edited by CHRIS ULM. Published by ETERNITY COMICS

THE TWILIGHT AVENGER #1

Written by JOHN WOOLEY; illustrated by TERRY TIDWELL and TOM FLOYD; edited by CHRIS ULM. Published by ETERNITY COMICS

Just by way of observation, Eternity Comics seems to be on its way towards becoming the Marvel Comics of black-and-whites, in that they publish an awful lot of comics in a given month. Three more new ones just strolled onto the stands; let's see how they measure up, shall we?

First up is *The Argonauts*, by Bill Spangler and Pat Oliffe. For those who've been out of touch, Spangler also writes the *Bloodwing* book that's getting a lot of attention for Eternity, while Oliffe has been doing work on another Eternity title, *The Verdict*. *Argonauts* purports to take a team of highly-trained specialists and throw them into a covert war on crime, with a little bit of science fiction thrown in for good measure. Sort of a cross between *Mission: Impossible* and *The Secret Six*.

For my part, I found the series to be a rather intriguing variation of the theme. Spangler's writing is more accessible here than it is on *Bloodwing*—far easier to follow; and Oliffe's artwork is also a little clearer than it is in *The Verdict*. In other words, this book probably represents the best work to date for them both.

I was struck by a sense that the series didn't just spring up overnight, as many black-and-white seem to do nowadays. From several subtle things in the script, I got the impression that writer Spangler had given a lot of thought to how the book would be put together; everything seems to blend together so well. The premise may be derivative, but it's a class act nonetheless. I for one intend to go along for the ride.

GRADE: VERY GOOD

Bushido deals with a family of Japanese mutants with a code of honor that compels them to fight crime. (Hey, just what comics needs more of!) Each of the young mutants has the same basic type of powers: mental, telekinetic abilities. Kind of like *Mat the Psychic Girl* meets *Yakuza*, especially since the villains of the book are indeed the Yakuza.

Though the premise is once again derivative, and the writing itself is a bit weaker than on *Argonauts*, the book does still have a certain charm. The "good guy" characters are pretty much likable, the manipulations and "wheels within wheels" sub-plots are reasonably well done, and I'll confess I'm somewhat curious as to how this initial storyline will turn out. Balfour needs to work on his dialogue,

Bushido #1

however; it has a tendency to sound hokey in some places, especially when some of the characters are giving "pep talks" to the others. This is nothing that can't be corrected, however. And there isn't anything to complain about with the artwork, either. Dunn's pencils are still a pleasure to look at. Though this is the weakest of the three, I think it still deserves a chance; give it a try.

GRADE: GOOD

Twilight Avenger is at least one jump ahead of the other two in terms of reader identification, since Elite Comics published two issues of it before they closed their doors a while back. I myself never saw those first two issues, and so this book was my first exposure to the character.

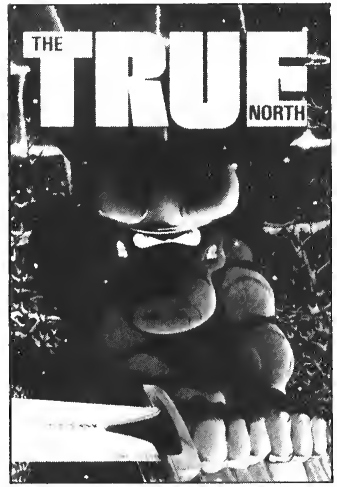
For those who are similarly afflicted, the Avenger is a hero in the 1940's taking many of his cues from the Shadow and others of similar ilk. His gimmicks aren't anything really wild or flashy, he doesn't have a group of unique characters aiding him on his exploits . . . but he does have a certain pizzazz to him. This, I think, is attributable to writer Wooley's professed love for the genre, you can tell he's having fun with this. That trait, the ability to have fun with what you're writing, can do more to get me to like a book than just about anything else. If the writer's having a good time, it's going to show in his work . . . and it's infectious. It draws you into enjoying yourself as well; you can't help but feel good after you finish the book. Of course, the fact that both Wooley and Tidwell are consummate craftsmen doesn't hurt, either. I had a good enough time that I'm anxious to see more of the Twilight Avenger; I'm signing on for the long haul on the series. If you picked up on the book over at Elite, you'll no doubt be joining me; if you've never seen the character before, I recommend you seek this one out. You won't be sorry.

GRADE: VERY GOOD —David Poettle

"Comics in Review" reviewers rate a comic's story and art using the same system that comics collectors use to rate the outward condition of their comics. For those of you who don't happen to be collectors the ratings are, in descending order...

PRISTINE MINT
MINT
NEAR MINT
VERY FINE
FINE
VERY GOOD
GOOD
FAIR
POOR
COVERLESS

On September 22, 1987, the R.C.M.P. confiscated 192 comic books from **Comic Legends** in Calgary. The owner, the manager and one employee were charged with circulating obscene materials, for which the maximum penalty is two years in jail and $2,000 in fines. The message is clear: The right of Canadians to read what they want to read is threatened. The right of retailers to sell material intended for adults to adults is threatened. In Canada, freedom of speech is being limited under the judgment of an uninformed minority.



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JERICHO WILSON
Bellbrook, OH 45305-1722

Close to the Heart

Please print this letter. Never has an issue been so close to my heart. "Out of the Closet and into the Comics" was the most overwhelming article I have ever read. The revelations about the comics industry and the statements from creators were shocking. I've never felt such murderous rage in all my life. I'm sorry, I know that sounds violent but that is exactly how I feel.

You have many quotes from gay comics professionals who are anonymous. This is ghastly. By hiding their gayness from their gay fans, these writers and artists have only reinforced the perception to gay readers that being gay is something to be ashamed of. Teenagers run away from home or kill themselves because they cannot accept their own gayness. A lot of them end up on the street selling their bodies or worse. Some of these people are comics fans. What a difference it would make to their self-esteem to know there are people just like them who create those comics—happy, well-adjusted and respected.

Just to listen to these anonymous professionals makes my blood boil. Their statements are ludicrous. "There's no reason for anyone to hide anymore," said an anonymous bisexual female artist! Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't that an absurdly obvious contradiction? "Some readers may just need to see a good role model of a gay man or a lesbian, to come to grips with their feelings," said one gay writer. A brilliant observation from someone who is literally undermining his own cause!

Before I legally changed my name, I had a letter published in *Wonder Woman #18* in which I said I was gay. I have since been overwhelmed with letters of support (17 at last count) from gay and straight men alike. However, being openly gay is not always so rewarding. With no college, I have worked mostly minimum wage jobs where I have little job security. Nonetheless, I have always been openly gay and I have never lost a job because of it.

My average income is usually less than $4,000 a year. I have no insurance of any kind nor do I have a savings account. This is strictly my fault—I am no financial whiz. Still I have always been openly gay even with so much to lose and so little security. And what would happen to Mr. or Ms. Comics Professional if he or she came out? Even if the company they worked for fired them, the worst that could happen is that they'd end up working for somebody else! For God's sake, there's always somebody greedy enough to want to make money off their talent whether they're gay, straight or sleeping with cats and dogs!

These anonymous gay creators would have to move to another company, making money in the same pay range, doing something they love. What a loss. How inconvenient it must be to have to move from one comics company to another. How dare I complain when I'm living below the poverty level, struggling to make it on my own and still manage to be openly gay.

These people have no business complaining about homophobia in the comics industry when they are literally contributing to it by their own inaction. Do they really want to change the prejudice by omission ram-

pant in comics today? Michael Jackson may be eccentric but he knew what he was talking about in "Man In The Mirror." "If you wanna make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make a change." Too many pay the price for these anonymous creators, in fans not free to express their identity and characters that may never see the light of day.

I hope there are many fans who share my sincere desire to drag the comics industry out of the closet. Please note that due to the requests of those who wrote me when my letter appeared in *Wonder Woman* I am organizing a gay comics club. As yet I have not heard from a single lesbian. If this letter sees print, I hope the latter situation changes rapidly.

To Kevin: even if you do not wish to print this letter, please print my full address and let gay comics fans know there is a club for them.

To said fans: please write. In droves.

To the anonymous gay creators: the AIDS Activists have a slogan SILENCE IS DEATH.

CAROL AVEDON
East Ham, London, ENGLAND

Sexual Politics

Is sexual politics back in again, or is it just finally hitting the world of comics? I didn't even have time to react to the women's issue before being hit with that lengthy two-part article on gays in comics. Well, it's okay with me, either way—it's never too late for a little consciousness raising.

In your editorial for the women's issue, you imply that you have no intention to simply ghetto-ize the subject into a single issue, and I hope you mean that enough to follow through. I can see many ways to do that—for example, you mention people you weren't able to get material from in time for the deadline, and there is no reason at all why those features can't be included in future issues, just as if those women were *real* comics professionals worthy of mention in other issues of *Amazing Heroes*. I also noted a great deal of interesting subject matter that was mentioned in passing (especially in that wonderful interview with Colleen Doran) which was worthy of five or six separate articles expanding those subjects in greater depth. (And if you ever want a radical feminist's view of why the nearly-pornographic aspects of the original run of *American Flagg* were not necessarily a bad thing, please note my address and phone number above).

Andy Mangels did a nice job in his lengthy article on gays in comics, but there were a few places where it was punctuated with an uncomfortable naivete—for example, where he suggests that lesbian mothers are unlikely, in this day and age, to lose custody of their children because of their sexual preference. I only wish this utopian view of the situation were true, but the fact of the matter is that there are plenty of lesbian mothers around who can tell you otherwise.

Further, in the discussion of Maggie Sawyer, Mangels also leaves the implication that there is something unusually paranoid in this woman's unwillingness to come out of the closet. Now, wait a minute! As is so rightly observed, even comic artists are not very brave about coming out of the closet, despite the fact that they work in what is—believe it or not—a relatively enlightened professional group. The police department is quite another matter, believe me. I wouldn't count on this woman's chances of keeping her job if the other cops ever found out Maggie was gay. Even if she wasn't fired outright, the harrassment would probably reach an unbearable pitch in relatively short order.

All things considered, it is hardly unrealistic or unfair to portray gays (or women, or blacks) as being afraid of the consequences of bigotry and discrimination. While it is true that gays, blacks and women are every bit as intelligent, decent, competent and human as straight white men, it is also true that we live daily under threat from the evils of sexism, heterosexism, and racism. Our lives *do* differ from those of straight white men because of this, and it would be dishonest to pretend otherwise.

Surprisingly, no one mentioned the one aspect of Gregorio that I found truly objectionable—the suggestion that he could not breed. Like Maggie Sawyer, gay people often want and have children, and there is no reason why Gregorio can't do so as well. I know plenty of people who have gay fathers or gay mothers (and sometimes both). To pretend that a lack of desire for the opposite sex precludes mating is ludicrous, and ignores what we know about heterosexual activity—surely no one really beleives that every conception is always preceded by unbridled lust on both sides? Both males and females take part in sexual activities that don't really interest them because they feel it is their duty in marriage, and this includes heterosexuals who just happen to be badly matched.

One last thing. Boys—and I direct this especially to Andy Mangels—*please* don't refer to bra sizes when you don't know what you're talking about. A woman who wears a 44B bra doesn't have big breasts—just an enormous rib cage or an astonishing fat-coating on her back and ribs. The number in a bra size is not a bust measurement. Only the cup size (the letter) refers to that. A woman who wears a 32D has big breasts—a woman who wears 36C has *smaller* breasts, but a larger back/rib measurement. Capice? I have never in my life seen a cheerleader whose *bra* size exceeded 36, although their bust measurements may have been larger than that (although, bearing in mind that the bulk of the breast is made up of fat, the strenuous activity of cheerleading is likely to *reduce* breast size). The number in a bra size is the back/rib measurement plus 2 (don't ask me why—that means if you have a back/rib measure of 32 inches, you wear a 34 bra). The letter refers to the number of inches by which the bust measurement exceeds the back/rib measurement (one inch=A, 2"= B, etc). So a woman who wears a 44B would have a 42 inch back/rib measurement and only two more inches in bust measurement—proportionately, a pretty small set of tits. A woman who wears a 34D has a fairly small back/rib measurement and proportionately pretty big tits with four full inches added by the breasts (36" bustline). Got that?

● *Got it, ma'am.*

And I have it from the very highest sources (my wife, Lynette) that AH *will continue to regularly spotlight significant woman creators.*

The American Flagg! *thing sounds like fun. Throw in an analysis of* Black Kiss *and the job is yours.*

Of course you're right, many homasexuals do want children, but I seem to remember that "breeder" was a derogatory term for heterosexual a few years ago among certain radical gay elements. Maybe Gregorio is of that ethos. (And maybe I don't even know what I'm talking about—do any of our gay readers remember that term and its connotations?)—CWM

DUANE HITCHCOCK
San Diego, CA

A Christian's View

Let me first point out that I am a practicing Christian—that is, a fella who believes that Jesus Christ of the Bible's New Testament is the son of the only true God and that he (Christ) died to redeem (take the punishment for) my sins, and set an example of how God wants us all to live. I do not believe that a Christian's purpose is to judge, harangue, persecute or otherwise condemn other people for their beliefs or lifestyles. The Christians—or those who call themselves Christians—that have taken it upon themselves to cleanse the world of sin and immorality just do not understand their mission: which is to spread the words of Christ and tell what He did. Christ did not excuse the sins of adultry, fornication (sex outside of marriage) nor homosexuality, but he was compassionate and understanding to those that chose to lead those kinds of lifestyles. It would seem that those who scream loudest about the "horrible sin of homosexuality" are just hiding the guilt they feel for their far more abhorant sin of adultery (a la Jimmy Swaggart). Jesus taught us to hate sin but *love* sinners, because we ourselves are sinners (albeit forgiven). It was in this spirit that I found your series of articles very commendable for their noble intent: which was, in part, to point out the immorality of unjustified hatred and violence against the gay community *in the name of morality*.

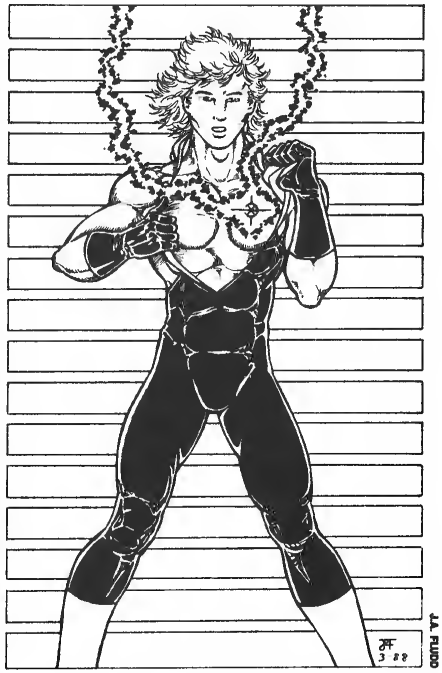
But before I get to the main purpose of this letter, I would like to comment on a few elements of the articles that detracted from the above noble purpose (for myself, at any rate).

1. The total condemnation of Jim Shooter's Hulk story (the one that dealt with Bruce Banner almost being raped by gays).

From an armchair critic's point of view, Shooter's story was certainly ill-timed in that it was the first above ground, gay comic story and it featured the gays as vile rapists. As an Editor-in-Chief, Shooter should have certainly had better sense than to break new ground with a story that inspires contempt and fear of homosexuals.

However, author Andy Mangels refused to consider the human element that went into the yarn. Shooter stated that he (and an un-named friend) had experienced the same episode that he wrote Banner into. I would challenge anyone, and Mr. Mangels in particular, to write a sensitive, unbiased story about gays after such an experience (this is assuming that Mangels is not gay, but even if he is, I would like to think that he would still consider such an episode to be rape).

In every story that I've read concerning some kind of prejudice, the perpetrators are always portrayed as inhuman, unfeeling scum, while the victims are portrayed as innocent as newborn babes. The conclusion or point here is that when someone has



been burnt or abused by another, it is very difficult for that someone to find redeeming qualities in the other. Female rape victims often hate all men because of what one man did to them. This is not necessarily a just attitude, but it is certainly understandable considering the circumstances. It is highly unfortunate for the gay community that of all people a few "bad guys" assaulted, he had to be the Editor-in-Chief of a major publishing effort. This is a sad case of "a few people messing things up for the majority." I feel badly for the gay community that is law abiding, but I am extremely alarmed by Mangels complete lack of compassion or sympathy for Shooter, the almost-victim of a vile, selfish act (rape)! In fact, in his effort to completely discredit and condemn Shooter's story, Mangels questioned his *veracity*, i.e. saying that we had to take Shooter's word for it that he or the un-named friend ever had such an experience! I don't know whether Mangels (or you Mr. Dooley) realize it or not, but this line of thought opens Mangels multitude of anonymous sources to question! In other words, why should we take Mangels word for it that any famous, gay comics writer, artist, editor, whatever made any contribution *whatsoever* to his article? I was very surprised that you, as editor, let this enormous chink in Mangels armor slip into publication. I think Mangels would have made his point quite nicely if he had stuck to "just the facts, ma,am!"

2. And then there was Mangels effort at putting words into Max Allan Collins's mouth! Collins was merely addressing the sheer impracticality of homosexualty: "no chillums." Mangels hoped to discredit this statement by having us read something that *wasn't* between the lines: Collins feels that sex, hetero or otherwise, is *not* a source of fun or pleasure! A very lame effort indeed! I'm sure that if Collins has read the piece, he's already taken the time to blast Mangels, so I'll go no further, except to say that I was very embarrassed for Mangels and if *I* should ever have the dubious pleasure of being interviewed by him, *I will be very careful to explain everything I say to him* so that he makes no egg-on-his-face assumptions from my statements!

3. In your opening editorial, you stated that homosexuality is normal or natural. I would challenge you to cite evidence for this statement. Just as Evolution is still an unproven theory, science and psychologists, secular and religious factions both, have *not* been able to prove (nor *disprove*) that homosexuality is "natural" (a relative statement if I ever heard one). Do you have evidence that science does not, Mr. Dooley? If so, I am surprised that you, as a journalist, did not support your assertion with this hard evidence. If you want "homophobes" to accept your views, you really must be more convincing in your arguments than theirs.

4. In that same editorial, you dismissed AIDS as a disease not limited to homosexuals. If this is so (and I believe it is), Why was AIDS even an issue in Mangels "Gays in Comics" articles? It would seem that an "Aids in Comics" article would be the proper forum for such a discussion. I do understand, however, that male gays are very susceptible to the disease, because the very nature of anal intercourse is an ideal setting for the transferal of the virus (the delicate anal tissues and all). When I meet a male gay, the first word out of my mouth is not a self-righteous accusation of "sinner!," but something like, "Hey, man, are you *protecting* yourself? Be careful man. Sex, hetero, homo or otherwise, is not worth dying over!" (And no, Mr. Mangels, the *second* word out of my mouth is not "sinner!" either!)

5. I felt that Mangels's thesis: "10% of the world's population has always been gay, ergo 10% of all comic characters should be gay" a little hard to swallow. First, where is the hard evidence for the 10% business (no one asked *me* nor any of my *gay friends* our sexual preference!)!?! Secondly, does he imply that 10% of Calvin's (of *C. and Hobbes*) 6-year-old friends should be gay? I firmly believe that creative writers should not let "statistics" castrate their creativity. I doubt that *90% of Gay Comics'* characters are heterosexual! Let each comic creator determine the who-how-what-where-and-when of his/her stories. If the First Amendment truly protects a writer from all censorship (and it doesn't, child-porn is illegal), he/she should also be protected from butt-in-skis who tell them *what to write*!

Ah, but let me contradict myself lightly. I believe that when the First Amendment was drafted, the writers had no idea that it would be broadly and liberally interpreted to mean "anything goes" as far as the free press is concerned. If you will remember the context of the times, America had just won its independence from a government that would not allow criticism of itself to be publicly disseminated. I believe that the intent of the First Amendment was (among other things) to allow vigilant writers to condemn our own government or its members should abuses of power occur. It is in this spirit that I believe Mangels article is a responsible one. Perhaps some of his critism is unsuccessful, but one aspect (perhaps the *major aspect*) of his article in which he encourages writers to treat gays with a bit more sympathy and a lot less stereotype, makes the whole effort worthwhile. I feel that it is the comic-fan press *duty* to inform fandom about potential injustices being done to minorities and subsets in our society and around the world within the context of current comic books. It is also wholly right to encourage comic writers who are doing something about the matter to continue to do so. People need to know that homosexuals are much more than evil devients whose every waking moment is preoccupied with finding another member of his/her own sex and corrupting that person into following his/her lifestyle. Though the Bible calls such a lifestyle a sinful one, gays hardly deserve the same contempt one should reserve for axe murderers and terrorists. Gays are people, too. *God loves them, too!* The Christian community—*especially* the Christian community—should follow God's example.

And speaking of subsets and minorities receiving bum raps because of a few bad examples and stereotypes being propetiated in the mass media, I would finally like to deal with my real reason for writing. If you haven't guessed it already, I am addressing the harsh treatment religious groups, specifically Christian groups have received. *Boy*, Gays thought they had it bad with Shooter's Hulk story and Collins' *Ms. Tree*! They should try living down *The Cult*, Early issues of *Dreadstar*, current Green Lantern stories in *Action Comics Weekly*, the first two issues of *Wildknights*, current story-lines of *Justice*, *Cerebus*, and yes, even Howard Cruse's Dancing Nekid with the Angels! And many, *many* more!

Allow me to discuss some of these: In *Dreadstar* and *Cerebus*, we get the stories of Religious Organizations going mad (or drunk) with power. Mass executions are ordered for all who would disagree with Church Doctrine.

In Green Lantern (Action Comics), the Oprah show briefly featured convicted murderers whose religious convictions led them to their crimes.

Wild Knights #1 and #2 featured a crazed group of fanatics who went about killing other WWIII survivors in the name of "Heaven" and "Mercy."

John Tensen of *Justice* has decided that it is his "holy" Mission to kill all "bad" paranormals.

A recent *Wild Dog* serial had a "Moral Majority" type group killing, maiming and destroying all those who would dare to publish or distribute "Immoral literature."

And finally we have Howard Cruse. According to his comics *every* Christian (or Christian group) featured is thick-headed and judgemental of others. *No* examples of good Christians here, folks! (Before Cruse goes about generally accusing others of being unfairly judgemental, I would challenge him to first render *himself* free of that sin!)

Well, the sad fact of the matter is that most of the above examples had or have a basis in truth. All of those things have occured in one form or another. Perhaps more people have been killed or burned at the stake by "Christians," in the name of God, than for any other cause or movement.

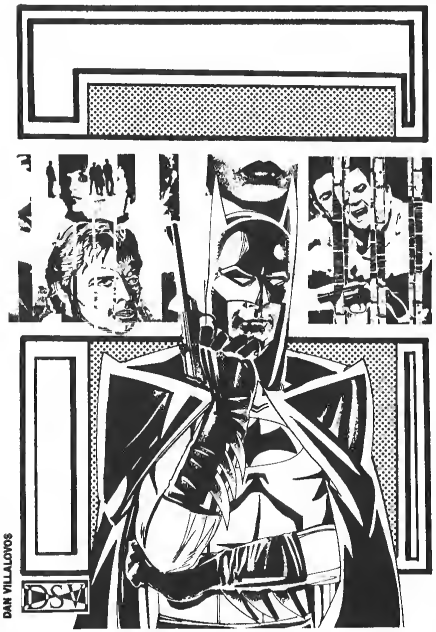
However (comma), those horrible events are not the *only* example of Christianity, its history or its purpose. Like "BAD GAYS" giving the gay cause a bad name, a few misguided religious leaders (with even more misguided followers) have done their level best to serve God in the way they saw fit, only to embarrass Him and all Christians who genuinely seek to love and help their fellow man.

DARRICK ROBERTSON / RICK REEVES

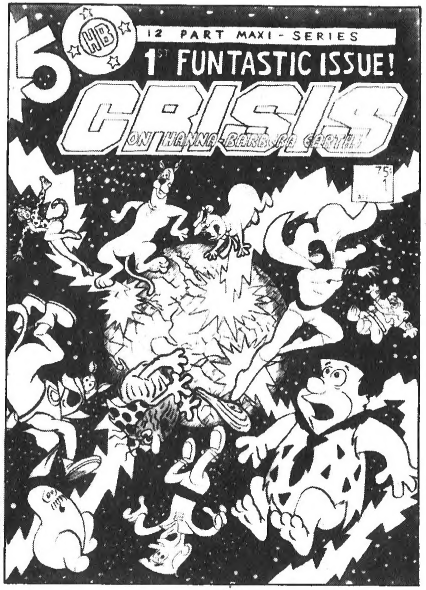
My conclusion is much along the same lines that Mangels applied to the treatment of gays in comics. For whatever reason, whether popular fiction writers genuinely *hate* Christians and religion, or whether the theme of "Bad Religion" just sells well, I feel that a large sub-section of the nation's population (Christians) suffers because of these stereotyped stories. Every day a Christian has to defend his faith to someone who just doesn't believe in a God who would tell someone to shoot John Lennon!

I'm not saying stop the "bad religion" stories, as awful and hurtful as they can be. I'm just hoping to influence or encourage open-minded comics writers to avoid the media-hyped religious scandal, and try to give us a balance of good examples of real Christians—those who follow Jesus' teaching, not their prejudices. While the writers are dishing up sensitive portrayals of gays, why not toss in a sensitive Christian as well?

Mark Gruenwald did Christians a service when he included his Christian Stephanie character in *D.P.7*. Chris Claremont gave us a Christian Nightcrawler in *X-Men*. Richard Comley's *Captain Canuck* seemed to espouse Christian mannerisms. The above creators may or may not be Christians themselves, but I feel they took a bold step in avoiding the stereotypical "Kill 'em in God's name" genre. Admittedly, good examples of Christians are hard to find these days. The place *not* to look for 'em are on televangelist broadcasts. But believe it or not, there *are* a bunch of us out here who would prefer to love others rather than give them con-



DAN VILLALOVOS



KEITH MCCAFFERTY

firmation that they're going to hell.

I cannot pretend to view homosexuality as a "live and let live" situation. The Bible calls it an "abomination" in God's sight. But so are murder, adultery, jealousy, and lying—sins that many forgiven Christians have commited. I hope that a day will come when Christians (and/or homophobes) and the gay community will at least come to terms with "let's agree to disagree," and work together on more pressing, immediate problems, like world peace or world hunger. Maybe comic books can help catch potential homophobes and Christianphobes when they're young and show 'em an alternative to fear and hate.

I enjoyed the "Gays in Comics" articles and admired their good intentions. Perhaps it is now time for "Christianity in Comics." Any takers?

● *Thanks for a very rational and sincere letter. I respect your motives and attitude, but there are a couple points you made that I want to respond to.*

First, about the Shooter Hulk story. It's OK for a writer to write from his own experience, and it's even OK if the story deals with the writers own fears and prejudices. But if all the writer can do with his own experience is use it to reinforce stereotypes it's bad writing, and if those stereotypes are bigoted and negative the story becomes dangerous, all the more so if the writer claims (explicitly or implicitly) that his own experience "proves" the stereotype is true.

As to whether or not homosexuality is "natural," you're right, it is a very relative term. But Andy did some digging and he discovered that in 1973 or '74 (sources citing the same report vary as to the date) the American Psychological Association declared that homosexuality was not a mental disorder, and in 1975 the same organization declared that it was a normal variant sexual behavior.

AIDS is not a gay disease, but I can think of several reasons it needed to be discussed in the article. First, at the time many of the stories under discussion were being written AIDS was more poorly understood than it is now, and there were many good reasons for creators to associate the disease predominantly or exclusively with homosexuals. Related to that, it would appear that at times prejudice against gays has been responsible for the lack of attention AIDS has received in comics (witness Northstar's mysterious case of AIDS—not-AIDS in Alpha Flight*).*

Several letter-writers objected to the 10% figure, so Andy did some research on that too. He tells me that the figure dates from 1948, and is part of the famous "Kinsey Report" recorded in the book Sexual Behavior in the Human Male. *According to this report 10.4% of males between the ages of 16 and 55 are "wholly or predominantly" homosexual. The Kinsey report was updated in 1977. That report found that 13.95% of American males and 4.25% of females were homosexual, for a combined average of 9.13%. These figures have been accepted by the American Psychological Association and quoted by many sources, including Masters and Johnson.*

I think you're being a little harsh on Dancin' Nekkid With the Angels. *One story in particular, "Jerry Mack," while it can't be called a wholly positive image of fundamentalism and fundamentalists by any means, really impressed me with its insight and compassion.*

Finally, write again and let us know what you thought of "Faith and the Funnybooks" from AH *#149!—CWM*

ALVY SINGER
Maple Shade, NJ

A Sad Commentary

Your article "Out of the Closet And Into The Comics" in *Amazing Heroes* #143 and #144 was an excellent example of responsible journalism.

It surely made a sad commentary on the situation of gays in comics. I was surprised to see how few gays have been depicted in graphic literature and I was amazed to find only one person in the comic field to bravely admit his homosexuality. Thank you Mr. Cruse.

Minorities of any kind are still very rare in comic books. There are a hand full of black characters, not many female main characters, and Asian, Hispanic, and Jewish characters are almost non-existant. But, gays are extremely rare.

It appears to me that the main factor for scarceness of gay characters is sex. Whereas other minority groups have skin color, national origin or possibly religion as their difference, gay people are different because of a sexual preference. And let's face it folks, sex is not a major topic for most comic books. I'm talking mainly about the 'big 2,' the mainstream super-hero comic books. Given the somewhat predetermined audience of those books I might be able to understand why DC and Marvel may shy away from gay characters. When it comes down to it why should they worry about offending some irrate mother when it would be easier to leave a character's sexual preferences unknown?

I'm gay (hence my mysterious moniker), and I'm Jewish. As much as I would like to see either of these inherant traits more apparent in comic books, I do understand their omission. The bottom line (and remember I'm basically discussing the "Big 2") is to sell comic books. And sad to say any deviation from the norm is scarce in the super-hero world.

I applaud John Byrne's Maggie Sawyer character, and I give credit to Steve Englehay's Gregario/Extrano character. Gregario may be a bit stereotyped for my tastes, but at least he's around. I also don't mind John Byrne's omission of the 'g' word in Superman's Maggie Sawyer character. I find living in our society discretion is necessary so I can relate to that air of mystery around a person.

We have an extremely long way to go in our world before being homosexual is more readily excepted and not considered an abnormality. It may take even longer for this acceptance to trickle down to the comic book world.

ADRIAN KLEINBERGEN
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

A Breath of Fresh Aircel

I am not writing this letter with the hope of it seeing print, but rather in hope of receiving some form of answer to the forthcoming question. I am currently employed with Aircel Publishing in Ottawa, Canada, performing the illustration chores for *Darkewood* after completing *Starstone*, my first job there.

It has come to my attention that a certain prejudice exists between Fantagraphics Books and certain persons administrating Aircel at this time. This is no concern of mine, but I must now ask: why do some of the other Aircel creative staff have to suffer the lack of coverage that your fine magazines (i.e. *Amazing Heroes*) could offer them because animosity exists between individuals? Even negative feedback is better than denial of existence.

What I am trying to say is that certain artists and writers should not be subject to bias simply because Aircel was the first comic company to offer them work. I believe that I can safely speak for Denis Beauvais, Dale Keown, Gordon Derry, and myself in saying that we would gratefully appreciate the coverage that other, non-Aircel creators enjoy.

I hope you will consider this request.

● *I know of no feud between Aircel and anyone at Fantagraphics, Adrian, and one of my jobs when I worked for* The Comics Journal *was Official Fantagraphics Feud Scorekeeper.*

Flippancy aside, we want to give every publisher a fair shake, and personalities don't enter into it at all. But we don't have time to read everything on the shelves at the comics shop, so we have to rely on mailings from the publishers. So if you want to see more Aircel in AH, *tell your bosses to send more stuff. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and the more releases and review copies we get from a given publisher, the more space that publisher will probably end up with in "Newsline," "Comics in Review," and even in the feature articles. —CWM*

NEIL GAIMAN
East Sussex, ENGLAND

Volstagg on the Beach

OK, I'm dumb. But in your caption to the (beautiful) Charlie Vess swimsuit illo you accuse him of paying tribute to that 'great illustrator' J.B. Cabell....

And here was me looking at the picture and thinking he was paying tribute to the works of American *author* James Branch Cabell. Specifically a) the action of Wossname (the fat one) attempting to make himself a fine figure of a man out of sand, sort of but not exactly like Manuel did in *Figures of Earth*; and also b) the meeting between Jurgen, Horvendile and Perion de la Foret (and here Volstagg the Voluminous (I remembered!) obviously represents Jurgen, or so I presume, since he's the only one of the three wearing a shirt) on the beach at Leuke in *Jurgen*.

Like I said, I'm not very bright, and I got it wrong.

Sorry.

● *Sarcasm is the hallmark of a dying empire—KT*

DEREK BROWN

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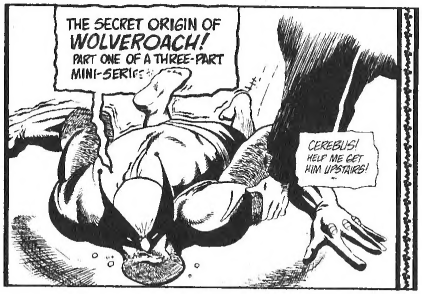
STROM'S INDEX

by Dave Strom

Chances of Aunt May outliving Galactus: 1 in 4

Percentage of twelve-year-old boys in a comic book store who will try to grab a copy of *Gore Shriek* if it is placed within reach, but in the adult rack: 15

If it is placed next to *Care Bears:* 0



Chances of Dave Sim suing Marvel over the Demon S'ym's resemblance to Cerebus: 1 in 10

Chances of him not doing so because he knows that Marvel is still irked about Wolveroach, five years later: 49 in 50

Number of shampoo company and health spa owners who would sell their souls to get the new Wonder Woman to do commercials for them: 11

Average number of times per issue that Speedball worries about his parents discovering his secret identity: 2

Average number of times per issue Peter Parker worried about Aunt May doing the same, ten years ago: 1

Estimated dollar amount the Flash could earn each year as a high-speed courier: $250,000

Estimated dollar amount he then would spend each year on groceries: $249,995

Ratio of Marvel comics that will be involved in Inferno to those that won't: 12:1

Ratio of Marvel comics that are in the mainstream Marvel Universe to those that aren't: 12:1

Chances of the creator of a successful black and white comic book forming his own company whose sole product is that one successful comic book: 1 in 20

And surviving more than one year: 1 in 200

Proportion of the Hulk's paycheck as Mr. Fixit that is spent on industrial-strength sunscreen lotion: 1/5

Dollar amount Tony Stark spends each hay fever season to upgrade the high-tech sneeze guard in Iron Man's helmet: $35,000

Average number of weeks past scheduled arrival date that an alternative comic book arrives at a comic book shop: 5

A DC or Marvel comic: 5

Chances of Jim Shooter starting some type of Secret Wars in *Ms. Mystic:* 1 in 5

Chances of the CIA continuing its secret wars in Central America: 499 in 500

Percentage of mainstream comic book companies that have run some form of the character Blue Beetle: 90

Percentage of DC's lawyers who would love to talk DC into suing Marvel over Daredevil having the "look and feel" of the Batman: 35

Average number of months between Thor's haircuts: 11

Chances of the above statistics being accurate, since I made them all up: 1 in 1,000. ●

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COMING THIS DECEMBER (WHEN ELSE?)

WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY GARY FIELDS

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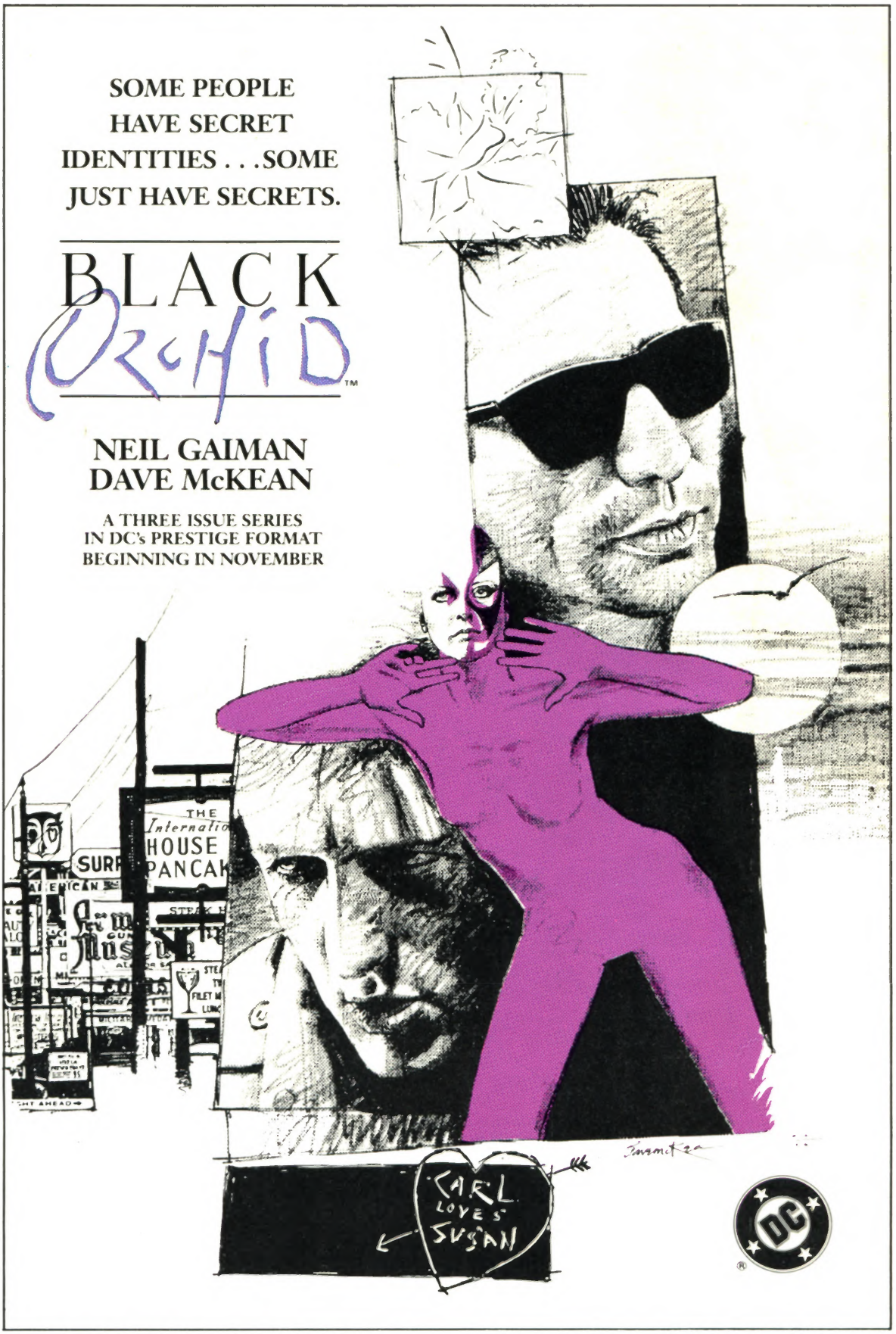

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